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HISTORICAL AND LITERARY

TOUR

OF

A FOREIGNER

IN

ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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HISTORICAL AND LITERARY

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LETTER LVI.

TO M. L'ADVOCAT.

The English often repeat the trite remark, that the liberty of the press is the ægis of their constitution. This protecting buckler reminds us, in fact, of that of Minerva, with its hideous head of Medusa, bristled round with serpents. But all kind of comparisons are exhausted on the subject of a weapon, salutary and dangerous at the same time; mine has been perhaps already made, at least by one of the poetical orators of Ireland. We are apprized by the pleading of Mackintosh, that the British journals alarmed Buonaparte at the time that he was aiming at universal empire. From the period of Peltier's affair, he never ceased negociating with Pitt's government, in order to

obtain in the first instance a prohibition to the press against attacking him; he afterwards wished to stipulate for its silence, at least engaging that none of our gazettes should make the least observation on the acts of the English ministry. Pitt might have desired to preserve peace at this price, which he could not, unless he had at his disposal laws for the suppression of the liberty of the press; but here the prescription of custom is stronger than the laws, and the jury would have been an asylum for the prosecuted writers. Let us suppose for a moment the possibility of a treaty like the above, with two despots, like Pitt and Buonaparte, at the head of Europe. What would become of representative government? To whom would history apply, in order to verify its records of the empire, if, since 1803, the English journals had ceased misrepresenting, falsifying, and even, if people please, calumniating.

It is only from the "glorious" revolution of 1688 that the liberty of the press, properly so called, is to be dated in England. It was not till four years after the accession of William III., that it was established on solid foundations, by the refusal of the parliament to sanction the continual restrictions which power required.

Power, no longer daring to prohibit the contest, is reduced to the necessity of defending itself, and pays or recompences the champions who devote themselves to its cause. The enormous revenue which it obtains from all the periodicals would enable it to have still a greater number in its pay.

At the commencement of the American war, the stamp duty was two pence a number; Lord North raised the tax to a penny more, remarking that it was not levying too high a price on the right of laughing at the expence of the ministry. (Mazarin did not tax political squibs.) By degrees Pitt raised the price of the stamp to near four pence, more than double the value of the journal. The number of newspapers increased proportionately. There appeared annually in London near three millions of copies of newspapers, which produced about 500,000*l.* sterling to government, and which, thanks, to the price paid for advertisements, constitute, at the same time, mines of gold to the proprietors. Of all the journals, the *Observer* prints the greatest number, amounting to 11,000 copies; but it only appears on the Sunday, a day on which the other journals do not. Of the daily papers, the *Times* has the greatest circulation; it prints 7 or 8,000. I have been curious in visiting the steam press of this journal, which strikes off 800 copies every hour. The size of the *Times* is half as large again as the *Moniteur*. This steam-engine,* which is calculated to terrify our ministers like a

* This press, which is of German invention, is placed upon a table. Two prepared cylinders receive the papers and print them off upon the form, which presents itself to the operation by an alternate and uninterrupted movement. A journeyman places the sheets on each cylinder, and a boy takes them away when they are printed. Four other cylinders, placed in the middle, and in pairs, serve to grind the ink, which a final cylinder transmits to the form through an aperture, &c. But we have at length imported to Paris similar machines, which are every day improving.

new monster, more formidable than the chimera, works with a four-horse power. It will be readily understood that the editors of the morning journals stand in need of this stenographic celerity, in order to distribute regularly their papers by nine o'clock, even when the sittings of parliament are prolonged till three or even five o'clock in the morning. The publicity of the parliamentary debates would be delusive, if they had no other witnesses than two or three hundred spectators, who might be admitted within the walls of St. Stephen's. By means of the journals the whole of England may know what has been discussed and decided three days after every sitting.

Every journal has its editor and sub-editor, who receive from 300*l.* to 800*l.* a-year. The editor is charged with the composition of the political articles; and the sub-editor with the revision of the accessary articles. The subalterns are the translators of the foreign intelligence, and the collectors of the *on dits*. But the chief workmen are the reporters of the two houses, and the courts of justice, who, however, in general do not employ shorthand writing. One of the great profits of the proprietors consists in the amount of the different advertisements, and the anonymous correspondences. An English friend of mine, who stands in need of great circumspection in the case of a lady whom he is attached to, indicates or receives assignations by a species of algebraic formula, which is inserted for a certain sum per line in the *Morning Chronicle*, and which the hus-

band, who is a great politician, never omits sending to purchase every morning at the *Morning Chronicle* office; for the daily publications are here very seldom subscribed for. It is to be hoped that the family may not have to figure one day in this same discreet paper in the column devoted to *crim. con.*

The advertisements of books do not generally come under the head of literary articles; and one kind of epithet is not paid for more dearly than another; provided it does not overstep the typographical line in exalting the merit of a book, authors may indulge in the pleasure of recommending themselves to celebrity with all imaginable zeal. The following article, which I translate literally, because it interests French literature, has been several times repeated in the columns of the *Morning Herald, Courier, &c.*

"More than fifteen dramas have been already founded on this romance,* which combines the historical character of Sir Walter Scott with the poetical eloquence of Telemachus, the genuine simplicity of the Estelle, the splendid imagery of Ariosto, the deep and profound interest," &c. &c.

An advertisement like this would probably be an enigma at Paris to those who have read Sir Walter Scott, Fenelon, Ariosto, Jean Jacques, Florian, &c. &c.

The daily papers seldom hazard a criticism upon

* The Recluse, a romance, by Viscount A.

a literary work; the *Morning Post* alone a little oftener. Specimens of verse, charades, anecdotes, also find an occasional place; but misrepresentations, calumnies, and personalities more regularly supply the column of *melanges*. The coarseness of the attacks transport the reader back to the *saturnalia* of the revolution. In a number of this day, the *Morning Chronicle* obviously calls for a Saint Bartholomew for kings, and especially for the assassination of the king of France, on whom it yesterday cast the foulest aspersions.—The other day the *Courier*, a ministerial paper, gratuitously insulted the ashes of an unfortunate poet. *Goldsmith's Monitor*, *Cobbett's Register*, and the *John Bull* would render Father Duchesne jealous of their cynical character. If there be a portion of literature, which is the expression of the opinions of society, it is unquestionably the journals.* One would, therefore, be tempted to infer that urbanity is not a virtue of English society.

The detestable forms, which political literature assumes here, would disgust in France, where we have, notwithstanding, if the English are to be believed, so little characteristic dignity. The English infer from this very delicacy, that we are not organized for the enjoyment of liberty; the question is to be viewed with relation to the different manners of the two people. English liberty

* In France, as in England, there are some raw scholars, who edit certain journals; but many of our literary *notables* are also concerned in the editing of the principal papers.

haunts the tavern; French liberty, ever since 1815, lives in our saloons, where it certainly exhibits as much frankness as the London clubs.

But, however that may be, a representative government stands in need of information; it is not enough for a minister to say, that he is about to play his cards on the table; it is necessary to play them before numerous witnesses; and he may be accused of tricking,* under the impression that he may be tempted to trick. There will be in the gallery partial witnesses, I grant; but they will obtain less credit as soon as their game is discovered.

The English journalists naturally recruit their ranks among literary adventurers, as the ministerial review calls them; but it is in the wrong to impute an evil tendency to all of them. There are some, it is true, who throw themselves blindly into the ranks of the literary army; but still, with the good intentions of the Irishman, who observing two bodies of his countrymen by the ears, and incapable of restraining himself from joining one or the other, plunged into the thick of the fray, exclaiming, "With God's will I shall assist those that are in the right." Vanity and half knowledge, which readily believe themselves capable of regenerating the world, place the pen in the hand of a young man just escaped from the university, who finds too many competitors in a more honour-

* This phrase belongs, I believe, to a minister, who has never ceased tricking since he held the cards. Gaspard L'Avisé, who was no Gascon, also began with the exclamation, "At least let us have fair play."

able career. The ideas of independence formed by youth easily become democratic ideas; but at the point which civilization has reached, it is too late to attempt to stem this universal propensity. And what a counterpoise, moreover, does a budget possess, for the purpose of gaining such as imagine that their talent constitutes a power in the state. Formerly it was the rebellious barons who disturbed the monarchy; now it is argumentative writers who dare to raise their opposition banner; it is with them that it is now necessary to fight and negociate by turns. In order to complete my comparisons, I will cite one which is entirely physiological, which I borrow from a brother traveller,* but which, in my capacity as a physician, I would willingly believe was my own, and to the half of which, at all events, Menenius Agrippa may lay claim.

"The consequence of publicity is the kind of transparency it imparts to the body politic, which enables you to see divers secret operations of nature, some of which are calculated to alarm you, such as the play of the stomach and the intestines, and the suction of innumerable thirsty canals, conveying into every organ health and energy, or disease and death in continual tides of the blood and the humours. There is, therefore, no derangement which is not immediately remarked; moreover, the cause and seat of the malady being visible, the hand and the instrument, directed by the eye, can reach them, and extract the evil

* Journal of a Tour and Residence, &c.

without danger. A frame formed and constituted on this model would have a chance of a long and healthy life; but it would also run great risque of not enjoying a very gay one. The soul which might appertain to a body of this construction, would contract precisely that habit of complaint and grumbling, so remarkable among the inhabitants of *beautiful* and happy England."

Politics are so often introduced now-a-days into medicine, that the introduction of a physiological comparison into politics may be fairly allowed.

LETTER LVII.

TO M. BOUSQUET.

We complain at Paris that our seven or eight journals become almost exclusively political, stifle literary criticism, and prevent the journals devoted to *belles lettres* and the sciences from finding subscribers, or even readers. Our *Journal de Savans* remains almost unknown; the *Revue Encyclopedique* has little more circulation, notwithstanding the excellence of its plan, and the pledge of merit supplied by the great names which adorn its wrapper. In London, more than fifty daily or

weekly gazettes do no injury to a dozen quarterly reviews, and more than fifty monthly reviews, which altogether circulate 120,000 copies. Less surprise will be excited by this fact, when it is known that the greater part of these works are really in the pay of some given bookseller, who converts them into an actual *catalogue raisonnè* of his commodities. These gentlemen have often the good sense to confide the editorship to men of real talent. Generally speaking, the class of English booksellers have deserved well of the cause of literature. These literary bankers are themselves *literati*. Their conversation is often equal to their better class of books; I should be sorry to detract from ours, but in order to speak of them as favourably, it will be necessary to judge them by exceptions. I shall not say all that is to be said to-day about those of London; nor about the different periodical publications. My intention, previous to treating of the poets of England, is to make known the genuine spirit of the two great critical authorities which protect or oppress them. The *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* exercise so great an influence in the three kingdoms, that their history almost comprises that of the whole of literature. I reserve to myself a right to appeal more than once from their decisions, or to combat them, while I attempt to analyze the various remarkable works of the age.

Before the appearance of the *Spectator*, it may be said that there was nothing but anarchy in the republic of letters. Addison and Steele took

upon themselves the office of censors, in order to re-establish order. This censorship was naturally calculated to extend itself to morals, which, certainly, stood in need of it at the period in question. Immorality and debauchery were preached from the stage; the upper classes of the nation combined a taste for vulgar pleasures with that of luxury; a woman was either the doll of the toilet or the head servant of the manège. The *Spectator*, by the cultivation of ancient literature, and the charms of his classical style, recalled genius to the wholesome rules of taste; by his ingenious satires, he polished, in some degree, the forms of society; by his often poetical apologues, and by his elegant dissertations on a philosophy more amiable than profound, he advocated the cause of morality. The extraordinary run which these daily papers had is recorded by contemporary writers. Budgel affirms that as many as 20,000 *Spectators* were sold daily, which was immense under such a reign as that of the phlegmatic William, at a time when the greater part of the nobility were still at their A B C. Queen Anne encouraged instruction more, or, at least, did not oppose the direction of the public mind towards the peaceable glory of letters. The imitations of the *Spectator* in foreign countries contributed to render the English of that period more vain of these brilliant essays.

One of the charms of these pictures of manners and lively criticisms, was the dramatic framework, of which Addison and Steele conceived the

fortunate idea. The personages of different characters and tastes who composed the club of the *Spectator*, or corresponded with him, impart life and motion to the whole work. It is impossible not to love the worthy Sir Roger de Coverley, as an old friend, whose least words are scrupulously preserved. And here I cannot debar myself the pleasure of fixing your attention for a moment on the two founders of periodical writing. Steele, especially, is little known amongst us. He has been the subject of a very interesting biography, by Dr. Drake. The friend and associate of the discreet Addison did not exhibit the character of a secluded *literatus*. He was one of those individuals who are easily duped by their own imagination, and prefer their caprices to their interests. The first *trait* of his youth was an earnest of his whole life. He expected his fortune from an uncle, who, being of an eccentric disposition, declared that no soldier, even if it were Hannibal himself, should be his heir; but Steele had with enthusiasm beheld a regiment on its march; his heart had beat at the sound of the drum; he believed that he had an irresistible call to become a hero, and renounced every other prospect, in order to enrol himself as a private soldier in the horse guards. Being shortly promoted to the rank of ensign, he plunged into all the dissipations of the town. But he also assumed the vocation of a man of letters, and a moralist, which he found sufficient time to discharge. The whole of his *Christian Hero* was composed, as it were, in the interval between the

disorders of the evening and those of the morning: each chapter was a religious expression of his morning repentance, for which his evening orgy supplied the text of a new page. He was at one and the same time a man of fashion and a philosophical censor.

He wrote his ingenious essays in the course of the day, wearing an enormous perruque, which cost fifty guineas. Having built an elegant *chateau*, he found it necessary to reconcile this luxury with his precepts of economy. The *chateau* was, accordingly, called a cottage. It was he who set the public right on the subject of the South Sea bubble, while he himself invented projects not less extrayagant. At all times, and in all places, Steele made himself useful to others. Faithful as a friend, and generous as an enemy, injuring nobody but himself by his indecision; he found himself forgotten, when he no longer played a part on the tumultuous stage of the fashionable world, and ended his days in involuntary exile, having spent and lavished his talent as well as his fortune.

More negligent, less pure, and less amiable than Addison, he displayed more originality, variety, and vigour in his portraits. Perhaps Addison was his superior in painting the passions, and it is probable that Steele, for want of study, only excelled in the art of seizing the exterior traits of an individual character.

To the *Spectators*, the *Tatlers*, the *Guardians*, succeeded the *Freethinkers*, the *Politicians*, the *Freemen*, the *Memoirs of the Society of Grub-*

street, and the *Champion*, till the sceptre of the censorship fell into the hands of one of the greatest literary despots, Doctor Samuel Johnson. The delicacy and *bonhomie* which characterised the criticism of Addison and Steele, are not to be found in this stern, melancholy, and fantastic censor. Rendered partial by his prejudices; suspicious, even when he judged according to his taste, because he was imbued with real literary prejudices, Johnson chiefly deserves blame for having sanctioned personalities in his criticism, by the imposing authority of his example. A romance writer of our day, Mr. Henry Mackenzie, revived, for a short time, the ingenious essays of Addison and Steele, in the *Trifler* and the *Mirror*. Neither should we pass over what a distinguished dramatic poet, Richard Cumberland, effected in the same walk. By the aid of these publications, which generally exhibit pictures of manners, rather than specific criticisms, arose a class of journals, such as the *Monthly Review*, exclusively occupied with literary compositions. The magazines were already invented; but criticism in these various journals mostly consisted of dry analysis; the object of which was, to exalt or humiliate an author; it was not intended to enlighten or direct the public taste, by reflections of an elevated order. Occasionally they contained heavy, or rather pedantic, dissertations, more calculated to create disgust against science, than to render it popular. However, by degrees, the readers became more fastidious, because a greater amount

of real knowledge was diffused throughout all the ranks of the social order. At that time in England, as in France, persons began (without, nevertheless, belonging to the sect of the economists) to cease despising the theories of agriculture, and commercial and manufacturing industry; the philosopher and the author were no longer separate classes. Every one pretended to initiate himself in the secrets of the arts and sciences. The merchant rendered worthy, by his wealth, of moving on the same line as princes and great noblemen, had also, like them, philosophers at his table. The maxims of state policy were as familiar to the physician as to the statesman; the lawyer did not confine himself to the composition of briefs, but learnt to forget the barbarous jargon of the courts, in order to criticise the productions of genius in a style of appropriate purity. The universal mind was in motion; there was a general thirst for knowledge.

The great political events of 1789 had agitated individuals as well as political bodies. The peasant whom the eruption of a volcano has awakened, and who witnesses its ravages, becomes curious to know the nature and source of the lava which has inundated the plains. In 1802, the volcanic crater, burst open by revolutionary ideas, smoked still. A work, therefore, which, embracing the vast field of the sciences, the arts, politics and literature, and which promised to recall the public mind to the principles of a national philosophy, was received with universal anxiety. This is not

speaking in too pompous terms of the *Edinburgh Review*, the appearance of which constituted an era, and which influenced powerfully the current of the new ideas, although it did not always follow a steady course. Who were the men who thus possessed themselves of the pontificate of letters? did the authority of names already celebrated confer on them a right of pretending to that sort of infallibility which criticism claims?

Some young men, who had just finished their studies at Edinburgh, united by the conformity of their taste, associated anonymously, in order to publish a quarterly review of remarkable works, or to supply by dissertations *ex professo* what those works wanted. The Rev. Sydney Smyth conceived the first idea of it; Jeffrey, the barrister, was the editor in chief. Mr. Brougham is also considered as one of the founders; professors Leslie and Playfair co-operated actively in the scientific department, and from all parts of England, auxiliaries, not less useful, both as poets and philosophers, considered it an honour to contribute to the reputation of the enterprise. More than twelve thousand copies of each number were soon in circulation.

Whigs, as to politics, the editors of the *Edinburgh Review* were naturally liable to the charge of a seditious tendency. Their evident partiality, ill disguised bad faith, and inevitable contradiction, in the space of twenty years, have drawn upon them severe reprehension. Our revolution has been sometimes appreciated by them with tolerable correctness; and Buonaparte, in his solitude

at St. Helena, was astonished to find that he had been divined in some of his greatest designs by this *coterie* of literary men. The decisive scepticism of Voltaire, and the soberer scepticism of Hume, form alternately the religious creed of the review. It speaks of the Scriptures with the same daring tone as it does of profane writings. King David, is no more at its bar than a lyrical Homer. The doctrines of the Gospels do not obtain a greater share of respect; Jesus Christ and Moses are to be found there confounded *pele mele* with Pluto, Zeno, Leibnitz, Voltaire, &c. The morality of the Scotch *aristarques*, is, therefore, a morality of reason and not of faith; it is the expression of a worldly wisdom, but which, traced to its last result, suffers the uneasiness of doubt to transpire, and would readily plunge into religious methodism, were it not for the last restraints of human respect. Notwithstanding the incorporation of measures which appertains to all anonymous societies, I am very far from laying the whole blame of these opinions upon all the members; it would be easy to find in near fifty volumes an abundance of professions of faith contrasted with each other.

There is still less unity discoverable in the style of this encyclopedia of criticism, redundant at once with the logic of Mackintosh, the invectives of Brougham, the pretending emphasis of Hazzlit, the elegant epigrams and the irony of Jeffrey, &c.

The desire of producing effect was calculated from the very origin to inspire these *aristarques*

with paradoxes of all descriptions, rash decisions and malevolent personalities. The protestations made a noise; this was, doubtless, all that they wanted; for the apologies never appeared. From time to time some unfortunate authors are still summoned to appear before the capricious tribunal, which exhibits the spectacle of their punishment to the malice of the reader. There is a refinement of barbarity in the martyrdom of those poets, the conception of which is, upon occasion, adroitly caricatured, in order that the public may be pleased with the perfidious shaft with which they are lacerated. In point of theory, the review having at first placed itself in opposition to some of the modern innovators, has remained for some time behind the general movement since 1789; but by degrees, without renouncing its peculiar prejudices, it has had the address to place itself at the head of the new school. It has perceived that the object of criticism is not solely to amuse mediocrity and envy, by indicating faults, which cannot escape the least experienced eye; but that it was necessary also to display a superior mind, which, taking lofty and distant views, should pronounce a judgment which posterity would sanction. Genius is endowed with that prophetic vision, which discovers all the fruitful germs of an original conception, and indicates the future march of human intelligence, as soon as it is able to ascertain its point of departure. Criticism, so considered, takes its rank by the side of Bacon; it enlarges, as he did, the circle of science, enriches

the domain of the arts, and multiplies the amount of our moral enjoyments.

It is curious to observe the *Edinburgh Review* setting out, by declaring the unchangability of the principles of classical taste, and some few numbers afterwards, applauding some recent poet for deviating from the beaten track, in order to proceed with energy and liberty.

Poetry, it is said, in the midst of allusions which would have caused the puritan ancestors of the editor to have cried sacrilege—"poetry has so much, in common with religion, that its laws were fixed ages back by inspired writers, whose authority, it is no longer permitted to doubt; as, also, that many pretend to be devotees to its worship, who cannot exhibit good works in evidence of their call. The catholic church of poetry has similarly performed but few miracles since the first ages of its establishment, and has since been more rich in teachers than in saints. It has had its corruptions and its reformation, and has given birth to an infinity of heresies and erroneous sects, the partizans of which reciprocally hate and prosecute each other, with as much cordiality as any other class of bigots."

A few years after this, Pope is no more than an elegant versifier; Addison, than a frigid prose writer. The genius of the nineteenth century has tended to redeem English poetry from the insipidity of the classical school. It is true, that further on, returning to their first principles, we learn that "we should seek in vain, in modern times,

that rich and harmonious versification, those correct rhymes, those energetic thoughts, and those skilful transitions which characterise the poets of the preceding age. Such is the thirst for novelty, such the inconstancy of taste, such the caprice of fashion, even in literature, that an author is warned, whatever be the vogue of what he shall dare to publish, that a few months will suffice to plunge him in oblivion. He therefore labours carelessly for so transitory a glory." "Whence it proceeds," adds Jeffrey, "that our poems, like our stuffs and our houses, although more brilliant in appearance, have much less solidity than the poems, the stuffs, and the houses of our ancestors."

These contradictions, which I shall exhibit in a more direct manner when necessary, would only be laughable if one dared to laugh at such an authority as the *Edinburgh Review*; but in spite of all its importance, one cannot avoid being occasionally disgusted by its calumnious personalities. Below is a specimen of its pretentions to a tone of levity and derision.

"There is a society of gentlemen well dressed, and in easy circumstances, who assemble daily at Hatchard's, the bookseller's shop; they are neat, polite individuals; hand and glove with people in office, satisfied with every thing as it is; and, from time to time, one of the fraternity writes a little volume; the others puff the said little volume, making their account, in being puffed in their turn as soon as their pamphlets appear; every

thing leads us to believe, that the publication before us is one of the pamphlets, written by the above personages, so neat, so polite, and so certain of the praise which awaits them, &c. &c.;" and after a strong, dry, and contemptuous decision, conveyed in three lines, the editor dresses the subject after his own fashion.

This was an intoxication resulting from the insolence of success. The ministry, for a considerable time, had felt the necessity of erecting one creed against another. The London writers were not sorry to have an inquisition of their own; the *Quarterly Review* appeared upon the same model as the Scotch review, and under the auspices of Murray the bookseller. The editorship was confided to Mr. Gifford, a very distinguished satyrist, who was enabled, in a short time, to organise a counter-association, capable of contending with the *elite* of Jeffrey.

The *Quarterly Review* is the natural organ of tory literature. It not only combats the religious and political principles of its rival, but it finds itself also prompted to arm itself with prejudices against such writers as were recommended by its rival's praises. Again, there was the same caprice for the poor author to encounter, the same insolence against talent and reputation. Private individuals, as well as the public in mass, may be periodically calumniated by the two reviews. Some of these articles are worth the refutation, for which we shall find room during the course of

our investigation. There are some which, if published separate, would be classed among the number of good books. I confess it with perfect frankness, I should glory to see my own country enlightened, and even directed by works of so high a degree of merit. This might be if our *savans* and our poets would rally their forces, and establish only a single undertaking of the same description. All that I despair of is their perseverance.

Since Napoleon, his glory, his tyranny, and his reverses continually reappear in the English review, it must be allowed that the *Edinburgh Review* has judged him almost throughout, with tolerable impartiality; but it is disgraceful for the ministerial organ, that it should have persecuted him with so much ferocity when the rock of St. Helena became his prison, for the good of Europe, no doubt, but for the shame of the British administration. Even since his death, their champions couch their lances against his mighty shade, as if his very memory oppressed them. I am, perhaps, less of a Buonapartist than many others; but these dastardly insults render me as indignant as exaggerated panegyrics. There is something sacred in the genius of an enemy.

LETTER LVIII.

TO M. PROSPER BONNARIC.

Dean Swift was a bitter wag, who amused himself occasionally at the expense of his countrymen. He has endeavoured to prove, at the end of his treatise upon puns, that Hebrew, Greek, and Latin are derived from English. But the English, whose ambition extends even as far as grammatical questions, have predicted seriously, that the day will come when there will only be two languages in Europe, the Russian and the English. These learned polyglots have also discovered a great analogy between their idiom and the Chinese. I am sorry that I am neither sufficient politician, nor sufficiently versed in the syntax of the mandarines, to be enabled to treat these two questions at length. Deign, therefore, to content yourself with the few notions which I have gleaned from the cumbrous volumes of the antiquaries.

The origin of the principal European nations is there referred to three great races: the Latin race, the Teutonic race, and the Sclavonian race. The various dialects of our days are all traceable to these three races. The Celtic language, omitted by Madame de Staël, would form a fourth family, if it were a fact well established, that it had been applied to literary compositions. Ma-

dame de Staël has also classed the English language among those which, like the German, the Swedish, the Danish, the Dutch, &c. are obviously derivable from the Teutonic; but it is true that it participates as much in the Roman or Latin. Since the time of Cæsar and Agricola, it was the fate of Great Britain to be continually conquered and occupied by different nations, which imposed not only their laws but their language on the vanquished. The Anglo-Saxon prevailed at the time of the union of the heptarchy. Canute introduced the Danish, but the Anglo-Saxon had taken such deep root from the time of Edward the Confessor, that William the Bastard was disabled from making more of the Franco-Normand than the language of the court and the bar. Accordingly, when Edward III., through hatred to France, proscribed the French language, he found that the Anglo-Saxon was still spoken by the lower classes. To speak correctly, there was at that time a complete fusion of the two dialects already reciprocally modified. At present the Teutonic appears to bear the sway. In the Lord's prayer, for instance, there are only three* words of Latin original: it may be added, that the construction of the phrases is more conformable to that of the Teutonic languages; and that the pronunciation, if not the orthography, disfigures whatever remains of the Norman words.

The English tongue, thus formed, continued to

* Trespass, temptation, deliver.

be a true *patois*, but a short time previous to the epoch of the reformation, and the bloody civil wars, which ensued. It did not acquire its finishing polish till the authors of Charles the First's time raised it to the full degree of perfection, of which it was more susceptible, in consequence of the remarkable richness and simplicity of its construction. The English is, in fact, the most simple of European languages; the termination of its substantives only varying in the double genitive and the plural; the verbs suffer little more than six or seven changes in their roots. Enriched by terms of art and science, allowing its authors to create as many new words as they please, or to borrow them from all the known dialects, the English language continues to be still the same hissing instrument of speech, of the imperfection of which the *Spectator* took cognizance. It is not less true, that it has always been sufficient for the purposes of genius. Milton's *palace of bricks* is not the less magnificient palace. The multiplicity of monosyllables is its most remarkable feature. This was what gave occasion to the noted phrase of Voltaire, that an Englishman gained more than three hours a day in conversation upon a Frenchman. As Algebra is the most perfect of tongues, the English are pleased with repeating that theirs has an Algebraic precision. It is singular enough that the reproach of circumlocution is that which its writers especially deserve. Such is the proficiency of the true English poets, that I would unreservedly maintain, even against an Italian, the following

eulogium of the English language. I believe it is Aaron Hill who has said, "Modern English is the most appropriate language for poetry. Its abundance of monosyllables (to which some persons have had the rashness to object) renders it energetic, expressive, and concise. Its Greek and Latin derivatives have adorned it with a variety of cadences, and intermingled the excess of its energetic consonants with the melody of the liquid sounds of the vowels."

Here the objection arises of itself; and our tongue has the same defect. It is the rarity of the vowels which impairs the harmony of the English poetry. But our author continues: "the English language lends itself to rhyme, and it is adorned by it. It nevertheless treats it in the quality of a subject, instead of obeying it in that of a tyrant. It is grave, solemn, sweet, gentle, airy, or majestic. It exhibits by turns the lingering of complaint or pity, and the transports of more energetic passions. It is an inexhaustible Bazar, augmented by whatever is excellent in other tongues; but all that it seizes is so well adapted, that it may be compared to the bee which gathers honey from the juices of flowers."

I am not inclined to object to any part of this eulogium; on the contrary, I feel prompted to apply to the English language that which Madame de Staël said of all the Teutonic dialects. In quoting the poets whom I shall endeavour to make known, I shall be unfortunately obliged to discolour beautiful verses by translating them. I am

therefore, bound in conscience to apprise my readers of all which they will lose.

"L'esprit general des dialectes teutoniques, c'est l'independence : les ecrivains cherchent avant tout a transmettre ce qu'ils sentent. Ils diraient volontiers a la poesie comme Heloise a son amant :

"S'il y a un mot plus vrai, plus tendre, plus profond encore, pour exprimer ce que je prouve c'est celui que je veux choisir."

"Le souvenir des convenances de societé poursuit en France, le talent jusque dans ses emotions les plus intimes, et la crainte de ridicule est l'épeé de Damocles, qu' aucune fete de l'imagination ne peut faire oublier."*

But relinquishing the mode of employing the sentences of another work, in order to express my own conceptions, I will add, that what I admire in English poetry is its combination of oriental pomp, (natural to a people who constantly read the bible literally translated), with a commercial familiarity which has nothing of a revolting cast in a literary commonwealth, wherein the people have their representatives as well as the society of the drawing-rooms. This pomp, and this familiarity combine equally well with a certain metaphysical turn of thought, which we are somewhat prompted to consider as romantic mysticism, but which does not displease the taste of contemplative minds. I appeal to the admirers of the fine talents of M. de Lamertine. In general the English

* De L'Allemagne. Tome 1.

poets attach themselves more to a picturesque and free style of expression, and to the variety of contrasts rather than to the academic forms of style. Their muse may create words and borrow them from all the languages of the world: and this imparts to her an air of wildness which does not ill associate with her independent attractions. But it is time to investigate the style of each writer, since it would be difficult to fix upon a common standard.

LETTER LXIX.

TO M. COULMANN.

DESIRING to enter into some details respecting the English poets, our contemporaries, I cannot allow myself to do more than cast a rapid *coup d'œil* on those of the preceding ages. A critical history of English poetry is still a *desideratum* in France; nor is there any complete one in England. A more interesting study cannot well be imagined for us than that of tracing the progress of the sublimest of the arts among the rivals of our glory. This study is essentially connected with that of history, since the poetry of a people is the faithful mirror of

its manners and traditions.* It is not alone to the caprices of the imagination, and the impassioned feelings that she imparts incorporation; she is also the expression of its religious ideas, and its morals, modified and varied according to the politics and customs of each successive age. I may be here allowed appropriately to introduce some lines of the *précis*, which I have attempted to draw up on the subject of the history of English architecture, sculpture, and painting. Perhaps these *redites* will at least exhibit the intimate alliance between the *beaux arts* and manners, through the vicissitudes of every age.

The Norman minstrels introduced the fiction of romance into England; the classic muse of the Greeks and Romans soon quitted the seclusion of the convent; but she re-appeared in the midst of chivalrous manners and feudal institutions. Gothic rites were combined with her worship. The age of Elizabeth still exhibits that strange alliance of two classes of literature, and two opposite religions. If Shakspeare had appeared fifty years later, his genius might, perhaps, have been entirely subjected to the forms and rules of antiquity. Had he been endowed with an imagination a little less independent and capricious, he would have been no more than a pedantic author.

Dramatic compositions were especially in favour under this reign and that of James I. The other

* The mirror and the fashion of the times.—SHAKSPEARE.
M. de Bonald has translated these words by this celebrated phrase.

branches of the art were not, however, neglected. Drayton, Beaumont, and Fairfax have left tolerably illustrious names in heroic poetry; but Spencer is alone sufficient to create the glory of that epoch. The plan of his allegorical poem is certainly very imperfect; but, like a skilful painter, he causes the faults to pass unnoticed by the richness of his details, the grace of his principal strokes, and the magic of his colouring.

English literature, during this age, gathered the first fruits of the emancipation of thought effected by the reformation. Shakspeare, Bacon, Spencer, Sydney, and shortly after Hooker, Taylor, Barrow, Milton, Cudworth, and Hobbes, were vast, bold, creative, and original spirits. One can sympathize with the enthusiasm of Warton, when he approaches that golden age at which his history so unfortunately terminates. Campbell equally appreciates it with the feeling of a poet. "This was an age of loyalty, adventure, and generous emulation. The chivalrous character was softened by intellectual pursuits, while the genius of chivalry itself still lingered, as if unwilling to depart, and paid his last homage to a warlike and female reign. A degree of romantic fancy remained in the manners and superstitions of the people, and allegory might be said to parade the streets in their public pageants and festivities. Quaint and pedantic as those allegorical exhibitions might often be, they were, nevertheless, more expressive of erudition, ingenuity, and moral meaning, than they had been in former times. The philosophy of the highest

minds still partook of a visionary character. A poetical spirit infused itself into the practical heroism of the age, and some of the worthies of that period seem less like ordinary men than like beings called forth out of fiction, and arrayed in the brightness of her dreams. They had 'high thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy.' The life of Sir Philip Sidney was poetry put into action. This age was worthy of figuring as it does in the historical pictures of the author of Kenilworth. The reception of Elizabeth at the castle of Leicester, recalls to mind all the classical divinities, as well as those of the chivalresque times, which the queen took pleasure in forming into a heterogeneous royal escort. But the historical romance writer* has felt it necessary, also, to remark, that a general failing infected the so much admired poetry of the Elizabethan epoch; it was the fatal taste for conceits—that is to say, the mania for substituting all manner of strange associations in sound and sense, for ingenious comparisons, and even for the national eloquence of passion. This style, of which the entire character of Percy Shafton, in the "Monastery," is an animated satire, was engendered at the court; a region, the inhabitants of which never imagine that they shine with sufficiently brilliant *eclat*, as long as they have failed in adopting a systematic language and deportment, which may distinguish them from other men. The royal pedant, James I. could not avoid encouraging

* Dryden's Life, the Monastery, &c.

Euphuism; the universities made it their tongue, and the poets, whom Johnson calls the metaphysicians, adopted it till after the first revolution. The phrase 'metaphysicians' imparts rather an incorrect idea of this school; for nothing can be less metaphysical than the poems and subtleties of Donne, Herrick, Cowley, and even Waller, Denham, and Carew, although the three last may not have always reverenced the melody of rhythm, the justness of imagery, and the elegance of terms. It is worthy of remark, that the youth of Milton escaped the fatal contagion of this pretending and mannerist style. He preferred to be misunderstood by his age, and after having composed the chaste verses of *Comus*, *Lycidas*, the *Penseroso*, and *Allegro*, he reserved for immortality the sublime creation of his great epic.

"His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."

WORDSWORTH.

The civil wars occurred to occasion equal interruption to the courtly successes of the *beaux esprits*, and the solitary inspirations of Milton. By imparting a more serious direction to the public mind, they developed the gloomy and powerful genius of the Cromwells and Harrisons, the more generous enthusiasm of the Blakes, the Hutchinsons, and the Hampdens; the indefatigable activity of Hollis and Vane, and the chivalrous fidelity of Strafford and Faulkland. Severer studies claimed the attention of Milton, who, after having plunged into the tumult of political

and religious controversy, recovered, at least, his lyre, to become the faithful companion of his adversity.

The restoration is not more often reproached in England on the score of its political results, than on account of the influence which it is alleged to have had on national literature. The critics affirm, that the French taste imported by Charles II.'s court, impaired all the originality of their poetry, and corrupted their morality. This imputation is absurd. The obscene quality of the courtly poets of Charles, the indecency of their satires, the bombast, or frivolity of their dramatic compositions, have little resemblance to the dignity (artificial, it may be granted) with which Louis XIV. surrounded his throne. At all events, it is under the reign of Anne that we recognise the actual imitation of our classics.

It was not a French taste which proscribed *Paradise Lost;* but rather the prejudices of the emigrants against the secretary of Cromwell. Dryden did not always imitate Corneille and Racine, but La Calprenède and Scudery. Unfortunately, the metaphysical poets remained as much attached, during their exile, to their bad taste, as to their good cause. They brought back the fashion of their extravagant affectation. "The muse," says Sir W. Scott, "arose like the sleeping beauty in the wood, garbed in the ridiculous and superannuated costume in which she had fallen asleep twenty years before."

Nevertheless, Waller, Suckling, Denham, Da-

venant, and Dryden, gradually returned to better principles, and abandoned the metaphysical style to satire. The *chef-d'œuvre* of the class was the epic parody of *Hudibras*, which displays a singular combination of witty sallies, and ironical affectation.

Dryden, almost a universalian as a poet, who, in order to become the rival of Milton, only required, probably, a less dissipated mode of life, or more generous patrons, exercised the influence of his capricious taste over half a century. Bolder and more variable than Pope, profounder and more energetic as a thinker, but unequal, and less delicate, Dryden has left models of odes, epistles, satires, and didactic poetry. The imputation brought against him, that he founded the continental school, ought not to make us forget, that he revived the romantic fictions of Chaucer, without denaturalizing them by his more modern style. The refinement of Prior, and the wit of Swift, assisted Addison and Pope to regulate the progress of English poetry. The supremacy with which Addison and Pope were invested by their contemporaries, is well known. Modern critics have dethroned these two monarchs of English literature in the eighteenth century. Addison is said to be no more than a man of limited talent, an elegant prose writer, but without eloquence; a flat and timid rhymester. Wit is conceded to Pope, but little imagination; great felicity of diction, but without any other variety than that of antithesis; a satirist, a moralist, a critic, a good writer; but

the author of the *Rape of the Lock* and *The Epistle of Heloisa* is no longer a poet. What, then, is to become of our Boileau? It is a remarkable circumstance, which I consign to the meditation of the *romantiques*, that the two legislators of classical literature in England and France, have succeeded best in their parodies on the poetic style and thought of the ancients. Which are the most *piquant* verses of the Lutrin and the Rape of the Lock? Those which apply to customs entirely modern, an expression appertaining to the epic manners of the heroes of Homer and Virgil.

Pope's imitators have destroyed their master in fatiguing the ear with the monotonous repetition of his rhyme. Thomson and Young were the first to make essay of a new versification. Thomson, more earnest in his enthusiasm, and more natural in the pomp of his style, because it is clear that he passionately admires that which he eulogizes; Young, hyperbolical and strained, seldom inspiring sympathy, because he is too theatrical in his complaints, as in his declamations: Glover, with the masculine energy of his Greek sentiments; the two Wartons devoted to the ages of chivalry; Gray, by turns melancholy and pathetic in elegy, sublime in his imitations of the Scalds, and truly inspired in his odes; Collins, rich like the climate wherein he introduces the personages of his eclogues; Macpherson, by inventing of a Celtic Homer; Chatterton, by investing with his genius a monk of the thirteenth century; Bishop Percy,

in reviving the ballads of the minstrels, all prepared the great poetical revolution of 1789.

The actual revolution of 1688, had done no more than disenchant the public mind. Representative governments, generally materialize too much in what respects the interests of society, to be in the first instance favourable to poetical abstractions. The *useful* and the *rational* are the divinities of the new social condition. The imagination, to use an expression of Mallebranche, is no longer any thing but the "*fille de logis.*" The soldier becomes a mercenary for twopence halfpenny per day; the knight-errant resigns his adventures in foreign countries to the merchant; philosophy analyses even religious opinions; and from all quarters is to be heard the same admonition—to distrust enthusiasm. On the other hand, the relative importance of the middle classes invites them to figure in literature as well as in the state. Under a government in which the king and the great men alone imparted the *ton*, the virtues and vices of kings and courtiers extended their usurpation even to the domain of comedy. When the *man* at length deserves to be studied in the inferior class, but while still unadapted for such poetical phraseology as was hitherto reserved, not for the portraiture of the great, but for the *beau ideal* of their social superiority; the man, I say, of the middle classes, and the noble considered as a man, are at first only introduced into the prose of a novel. England is indebted, probably, to the

democratic elements of her constitution, for the first *chef-d'œuvres* of her plebeian literature; I refer to the *common life* novels of Richardson and Fielding. Nor is it clear to me, whether such publications ought not to console the European nations for the loss of those epopees, which have been rendered almost impossible in modern manners. Meanwhile, poetry, properly so called, chilled by the progress of a civilization, becoming more and more artificial, polishes its style in the drawing-rooms, but loses in that atmosphere its frank, independent, and haughty demeanour; to its impassioned style succeeds the didactic and sententious style. The charm of its compositions, thenceforward, consists in accurate and delicate remarks, and in a witty dexterity of reasoning, couched in elegant antithesis. The resources of a poetry of this description are soon exhausted. The world, with tolerable facility, becomes tired of its monotonous perfection, although the authority of the critics who have created it, and the college prejudices which have associated it with the *chef-d'œuvres* of Athens and Rome, will not allow it for a considerable time to admit the fact. At length, when the avowal that the senses are palled can no longer be delayed, a desire of strong excitement declares itself; and if, at this conjuncture, important events, wars or (no matter what) political convulsions vehemently disturb the public mind, poetry becomes more enthusiastic, more energetic, more impassioned; she deserts the boudoir, and shaking

off the laws of a fastidious delicacy, participates in the disorder of the popular ferment. Literary England was in this situation at the approach of 1789. The poets, like the democrats, dreamed of a new social condition. The activity of politics in France, absorbed the general mind, which the despotism of an individual subsequently succeeded in suppressing, or distracting, by the clamour of his renown. All the force of a Pitt was necessary, in England, to arrest a similar impulse; the English people confined themselves, as to their interior concerns, to speculative polity; but the poets and the metaphysicians became more adventurous and fanatical. The first, especially, emancipating themselves from the authority of models, applied the most conflicting theories to practice. Reasoning, and even eloquence, were no longer sufficient qualifications for their verses. Imagination reconquered the licence it enjoyed in the time of Elizabeth; there was anarchy in all this, beyond a doubt; many attempts have not been justified by their success; but even they not unfrequently attest the erratic flights of genius. I will not extend this sketch of the characteristic features which are common to the new school of poets any farther, since their individual shades of distinction are more numerous than their points of contact. There are none of them who do not repel the idea of classification.

LETTER LX.

TO M. GOURY, D. M.

NOTWITHSTANDING the discredit into which the poetry of Darwin has latterly fallen, it had once so great a vogue, that the learned poet deserves to figure among the illustrious innovators of the English Parnassus. Another motive prohibits our forgetting him. This author, whose poems Coleride compares to a palace of snow, sparkling, but frigid and ephemeral, was obviously the model of model of Delille, who even literally copied some of his episodes. Like Darwin, Delille (in his *Trois Regnes*) *versified the Physical Dictionary, the Mysteries of Chemistry, and the Natural History of Plants and Animals.* The loans, whether avowed or otherwise, which Delille borrowed of Pope, of Goldsmith, Cowper, and Darwin, are so numerous, that if to these be added all that the ancients may reclaim of him, the translator of the Georgics will appear in no other light than the most fortunate of rhymesters. The study of the descriptive poets of England, inspired him still more than Virgil with his taste for the country. But it must be confessed, that his muse often described the plains with the antithetical style of the saloons, and that she was better pleased with the symmetrical

gardens of Le Nôtre, than with simple and irregular nature. His pastoral divinities are the mythological statues, whose motionless marble he reanimates. His shepherds are nearly as allegorical as those of Virgil. For my part, I never could read more than a page of his verses in the open air, without being visited by the apparition of my old *professeur de troisieme*, armed with his ferula, in the company of Jupiter and Juno. While copying Darwin, Delille has not, therefore, been faithless to his classical reminiscences. He has restored her flowers to Flora, her fruits to Pomona, instead of peopling the elements with sylphs, gnomes, and all those miniature divinities, which Pope had brought into fashion by the elegant trifling of the Rape of the Lock. This "militia of the lower sky" was charming, it is true, while sporting in the boudoir of Belinda; but it is out of place when blowing the fires of Volcanoes, or guiding the steam vessel over the watery plain.

The wonderful, in the poems of Darwin, attracted, in the first instance, by exciting surprise, through the variety of the allusions. Some of these analogies are singular enough, as those, for instance, wherein Dr. Franklin is compared to Cupid, I know not what plants to angels, and the truffle to a subterranean empress. But Darwin sometimes attempted more poetical personifications, and some of his isolated passages, which are equally harmonious and picturesque, are miserably lost in the crowd of his allegories

and metaphors. His passion for images prompts him to employ all that addresses the senses rather than the mind; and when he has to deal with an abstract subject, avoiding the details of its metaphysical nudity, he hastens to clothe it with a visible and natural form. The talent of Darwin is rather that of a painter or sculptor, than the talent of a poet. Accordingly, the greater part of his comparisons are taken from antique *bas reliefs*, cameos, &c. He revives, with grace and with energy, the inanimate forms of the mythological divinity, without stopping to employ whatever the pagan allegory might contain of dramatic or impassioned materials. This narrow circle, to which he restricts himself, explains the cause of the fatiguing monotony of his paintings, which succeed each other like a gallery, where the different figures of the same school appear isolated, without inter-communication, each in its own frame. Sacrificing every thing to picturesque effect, and depriving himself of the simple but touching language of the passions, Darwin was aware that an harmonious and various versification must form the indispensable ornament of his poems. Notwithstanding the uniformity of certain inversions, which often re-appear, his style is constructed on the same mechanical model as that of Pope, whose elegance, perspicuity, grace, and smartness it possesses; but it surpasses it in the affluence of its colouring, and the grandeur of its imagery. The translation of the second part of the *Botanic Garden*, by M. Deleuze, dispenses

me from any necessity of making long quotations. Delille has transfused all the brilliancy of the style of Darwin into his *Three Reigns*, not only in the third canto, consecrated to vegetation, but the rest of the poem. The episode of Cambyses is almost literally translated. Delille has, in an equal degree, availed himself of the *Temple of Nature*, a posthumous work, in which some of the theories of the *Zoonomia* are detected in versification. The picture of the rape of Europa by Jupiter, is worthy of the landscape in which Claude Lorrain introduces this mythological episode. But by the side of these smiling and picturesque images, Darwin has indulged himself in describing actual monsters. Sometimes it is a phenomenon of physics or physiology which he paints, as if he beheld it through a microscope; an object which exhibits nothing revolting to the naked eye, acquires, through this medium, hideous features, which the poet depicts with the accuracy of an anatomist.

> "Il n'est pas de serpent, ni de monstre hideux,
> Qui par l'art imité ne puisse plaire aux yeux,"

Boileau has said: but the art of Darwin consists sometimes in terrifying the eye by his imitations. It will be recollected that poor Gulliver found blemishes and inequalities on the white skin of the beauties of Brobdignag.

Darwin, at least in "enrolling the imagination under the banners of science," has avoided, with

more circumspection than Delille, those dry nomenclatures which make an actual catalogue of a tirade of verses.

> "Le Tung-stene grisatre, et l'arsenic rongeur, &c.
> Ailleurs c'est le nickel, le doubteux molybdene."
> *Les Trois Regnes.*

Such things make us regret the period when Lucretius sung of the nature of things, without understanding mineralogy.

The medical sciences also claim Darwin as the author of the *Zoonomia*, a work which I shall not investigate in this place, but which I shall take the occasion to examine elsewhere, with so much the more confidence, as it will be with the aid of the oral lessons of an eloquent professor, the pupil of the great Barthez,* and who, like Elijah, has inherited the mantle of prophecy.

Darwin had made himself known among his friends, by little private collections of poetry, before the publication of his great work. "With the wisdom of Ulysses," says his friend Miss Seward, in rather farfetched phraseology, "he had bound himself to the mast of science, in order to avoid being seduced by those deceitful syrens, the muses."

The doctor, after having perfected himself at Edinburgh in medicine, went to practice it at Litchfield, where the good fortune of his first cure introduced him to public notice. His marriage with Miss Howard, daughter of a respect-

* M. Lordat, professor of physiology at Mountpellier, and, certainly, the most eloquent of the French professors.

able tradesman, was also of advantage to him. His house became the rendezvous of a very agreeable society, of which the famous James Watt, and Thomas Day, author of *Sandford and Merton*, composed a part. Miss Seward relates several very amusing anecdotes of the latter, who was a very original philosopher, and known for his absence of mind. Darwin had also his little eccentricities: he had invented a carriage of a new form; but in trying an experiment upon it, he had the misfortune to be thrown out, and to break the cap of his right knee. In practice, as in theory, he was like Dr. Sangrado, the declared enemy of wines and spirits, preaching up to his patients the doctrine of temperance, as the great antidote and remedy of all diseases: nevertheless, he one day forgot his rigid precept during a water party, in which he was accompanied by several of his friends. Scarcely was the boat from shore, than he suddenly plunged into the river, and took the head of it like a skilful swimmer. His companions requested him vainly to return, and saw no more of him till they found him in the middle of the market place, haranguing an astonished crowd on the salubrious influence of pure air. It was with difficulty that he was induced to admit that it was high time to make some change in his apparel. He habitually stuttered; but it is affirmed that he spoke on that memorable day with marvellous volubility of utterance.

His head was not more proof against love than against wine. He had lost his first wife, when

Mrs. Pole, of Redburn, went to place her children, who had swallowed poison, under his care. The doctor persuaded the mother to remain with them till their complete recovery. Some time after, Mrs. Pole sent for him to Redburn to attend herself. The husband of this interesting patient was, probably, a jealous old man, and shewed so little hospitality as to decline offering a bed to the physician. Darwin passed the night under a tree planted opposite the window of Mrs. Pole, observing, with a restless eye, the motions of the lights, and paraphrasing the famous sonnet of Petrarch on the dream, which predicted to him the death of Laura. Luckily, his Laura did not die, and he was not reduced, like the poet of Vaucluse, to the eternal mortification of Platonic passion. Old Mr. Pole, by his death, condemned his wife to widowhood; but Darwin was enabled to prevent its being of long duration. Mrs. Pole accepted his hand, on condition that he should change his residence from Litchfield to Derby.

Erasmus Darwin was born in 1731, and died in 1802.

LETTER LXI.

TO MR. PIERRUGUES.

W. COWPER is not the only English author whose character often reminds the enquirer of that of Rousseau; you will yourself be able to detect many analogies between these two interesting madmen, who demonstrate how agonizing is the subjection of a soul "entirely divine," to the infirmities of material organization. Sometimes, indeed, these individuals, so little resembling others, would prompt one to believe in the exile of some superior intelligence, condemned to the trials of mortal existence, in order to repair some offence committed in heaven. Our religion apprizes us that the angels themselves were not infallible. Such an idea as this would have shocked Cowper, who lived secluded, less through pride than despair. Religion and friendship always supported his courage, and inspired his genius. He was, in fact, too timid a Christian to become a great metaphysician. Justly claimed, as he is, by the new school, he himself almost doubted that he was a poetical innovator. Cowper wrote less for the public than for himself and a circle of friends. He is the poet of the fire-side, and domestic enjoyment. Had his muse been more ambitious, she would not have possessed that combination of

vigour and simplicity, of daring and ease, of nobleness and rusticity, which contrasts with the classical, though somewhat fastidious, graces of the *beaux esprits* in Queen Anne's time. The life of Cowper has been written by his friend Hayley, whose narrative is interspersed with letters from Cowper himself. Mason had already furnished the model of this species of biography for the life of Gray. There was also a publication in 1816 of the remains of Cowper, which bear some analogy with Rousseau's Confessions, with this difference, that Cowper had written his with no other view than to read them occasionally, in the spirit of penitence, and in the way of a warning against the snares of the flesh and the devil.

William Cowper was born in 1731, at Berkamstead, in Herefordshire. His father, a nephew of Lord Chancellor Cowper, had been chaplain to George II. At six years of age, young William was removed from the care of a tender mother, to be placed at a boarding-school, where he was so tyrannized over by a boy older than himself, that he retained, through his entire life, a bitter rancour against the system of public education. A weakness of the eyes, which was, unhappily, a complaint for his whole life, determined his family to place him, during some time, under the care of a famous *oculist;* for it is, doubtless, a mistake of Mr. Hayley to say, as he does, a *female oculist.*

Thence Cowper was removed to Westminster school, and after having finished his studies there,

he was articled to a lawyer; but although related to the celebrated Lord Thurlow, who was destined to become one of the lights of English jurisprudence, he wasted three years in that situation in idleness or dissipation. On being admitted to the Temple, he carried with him such habits of profusion, that at thirty-one years of age he had dissipated nearly the whole of his patrimony. It was high time to think of the future: a relation who possessed influence, procured his nomination as a committee clerk to the house of commons. But being menaced with a species of qualifying examination, his timidity, of which he had never been able to divest himself, converted into torture the fear which is usually experienced by all individuals who have to speak in public for the first time. His anguish was so intolerable, that it turned his brain. He frequently made attempts to destroy himself; and his friends found the implements of his projected suicide in his chamber. He sent in his resignation; and the natural horror which the fearful expedient he had conceived for the purpose of avoiding the proof required of him inspired, only tended to accelerate the entire loss of his reason.

"I never went out," he says, "without imagining that the passengers surveyed me with a smile of contempt and insult. I could scarcely persuade myself that the voice of my conscience did not speak sufficiently loud to be overheard by every body. My acquaintances appeared to avoid me, and if they spoke to me, seemed to do so in terms

of insult. I purchased a ballad which was sung in the streets, because I imagined that it was composed in derision of me. I dined alone at a tavern, where I never went till night, and where I endeavoured to conceal myself in the obscurest corner. I slept an hour every evening, or rather, I was persecuted during an hour by the most frightful dreams, and on awaking, my limbs appeared incapable of supporting my weight. I staggered like a drunken man. I could not support the looks of my fellow-creatures; but the idea that the eye of God was fixed upon me, filled me with inexpressible affliction."

His brother and his friends resolved to take him to St. Alban's, and place him in a private madhouse, conducted by Dr. Cotton, an agreeable poet, and, moreover, a humane physician. At the end of nine months, his delirium grew composed, and his pious remorse gave way to the emotions of a more consoling faith. At the conclusion of a conversation with his brother, a ray of hope descended into his heart, and he beheld in a dream an angel, whose smile occasioned him the most delightful sensation. Having opened his bible at the first place which occurred, he applied to himself a verse, which gave promise of divine mercy, and from that time the name alone of Jesus Christ drew tears of pious emotion from his eyes.

When he was completely convalescent, he resolved to abandon London, and withdraw to Huntingdon, accompanied by his brother and a

servant, who grew attached to him by an instinct of affection in the house at St. Alban's; but as soon as his brother was gone, depression took possession of his mind. Solitude afflicted him; "I was," says he, "like a traveller in the midst of a wilderness, without friend to console me, or guide to direct my way." One cannot avoid remarking here that monastic institutions were especially made for minds like Cowper's; and had Cowper been a catholic, he would have recovered composure in these asylums which are alike open to all who are compelled to say, "The world is not fit for me; and I am not fit for the world."* Happily the poor solitary gradually associated with a family, with which he finally connected his destinies. This was the Unwin family, the head of which was the parochial clergyman. Mrs. Unwin, the mother, was a mystic devotee, a sort of Madame Guyon. The following is the manner in which Cowper describes the edifying occupations of the day. It is a little picture of a regular household in Great Britain.

"We breakfasted between eight and nine o'clock. Till eleven we read the scriptures, or the sermons of some orthodox preacher. At eleven we assisted at divine service, which is here celebrated twice a day; and from twelve to three we separated, in order to divert ourselves, each according to his fancy. For myself, I spend the interval in reading

* Lord Byron. This phrase would suffice to raise the cry of papist in England, where Cowper is more read as a rigid protestant than as a poet. I beg pardon of the *most tolerant Church-of-Englandism*.

in my apartment, where I walk about or tend my flowers. We seldom remain more than an hour at table; but if time permits we resort to the garden, where generally I enjoy the happiness of a religious conversation with Mrs. Unwin, or her son. If it rains, or if the wind be too high, we converse in the parlour, or sing hymns; and, thanks to Mrs. Unwin's harp, we get up a tolerable concert, in which, I trust, our hearts at least are in unison. After tea, we take a walk, and seldom return till after extending it to three or four miles. At night-fall we read, and chat as before till supper, and generally end the evening with hymns or the lecture of a sermon."

After the death of Mr. Unwin, the father, in 1767, Cowper accompanied Mrs. Unwin and her daughter to their new residence at Olney, formed an acquaintance with the curate, Mr. Newton, and composed some hymns, published in a miscellany a considerable time before he was known as a poet. At Olney, unhappily, his fatal malady recovered possession of him, and his reason remained eclipsed during five years. Mrs. Unwin lavished the tender cares of a mother upon him; and during the rest of his life Cowper endeavoured to discharge the sacred debt which he had thus contracted.

After this sad aberration of reason, Cowper resorted to the pencil for amusement. He painted some of the views in the neighbourhood; he also amused himself with making cages: but his favourite occupation was the education of three hares, of which he has left a very detailed *bio-*

graphy, and which he has immortalized by their epitaphs. How many heroes are there who have no other title than this to protect them from oblivion. One cannot avoid being interested with the agreeable description he has left of the familiar graces of docile and caressing *Puss*, the coyness and solemn airs of *Tiney*, a less sociable character, and the gambols of courageous *Bess*, the Vestris of the three. Let me hasten to avow, that similarity of taste renders these details, perhaps, more interesting to me than to another. I readily sympathize with Don Juan.

> "He had a kind of inclination,
> Or weakness, for what most people deem mere vermin,—
> Live animals."
>
> *Don Juan*, C. x.

And if sometimes I surprise myself dreaming of the glory of the poet, I readily rank my paroquet among the number of those with whom I could share my* immortality.

Cowper had already reached his fiftieth year when he cultivated his taste for poetry. He did not publish his first volume till 1781, the greatest success of which was the admiration it inspired to Dr. Johnson and Franklin. But the greater number of readers considered his verses too serious; and it required all the reputation of his second

* It is true that it is also the paroquet of my mother; and if the reader be tempted to smile, I refer him to the elegant chapter of Buffon on the paroquet.

volume to recall the attention of the world to his first.

In the course of the same year, Mr. Unwin received a visit from an amiable and still youthful widow, Lady Austen, with whom Cowper, surmounting his almost invincible timidity, united himself in the bonds of a strict friendship. The influence of her witty gaiety, of her agreeable manners, and her elegant taste, doubtless imparted unaccustomed graces to the muse of the solitary. She even suggested some subjects; the *Task* was composed in deference to one of her caprices; and the translation of Homer was also the result of her recommendation.

One evening that she perceived him relapsing insensibly into his sombre reveries, she took it into her head to relate to him the adventures of John Gilpin, a story with which her nurse, she said, had sometimes lulled her to sleep. This comic narrative operated like a charm on Cowper's imagination; he laughed at it so heartily, that, yielding during the night to the irresistible demon of versification, he composed a ballad which will consecrate the humourous style. This little poem would seem to be an anticipated parody of Lord Byron's *Mazeppa*.* Instead of the Hetman of the Cossacks, it is a city shopkeeper, who is about to spend the Sunday with his wife and family. His wife and children are conveyed by coach, and he mounts a hack horse in order to escort the equipage. Un-

* Blackwood's Magazine has *seriously* drawn a parallel between the two works.

fortunately the courser is hard-mouthed, and carries the traveller much quicker than he bargained for. The crowd stand aside; the turnpikes are thrown open; there is general applause; it is concluded that the worthy cit is riding for a wager; his hat and wig are left behind, &c. &c. The style, as may be easily imagined, is the chief circumstance which imparts value to this trifle.

Cowper was indebted to Lady Austen for the happiest moments of his secluded life. He attributed to the special bounty of heaven the circumstance of her arrival at Olney, and called her his sister Anne. But who is unaware that even friendship has its jealousies, and especially the always tenderer friendship of a devotee? Old Mrs. Unwin could not behold without pique the ascendancy which a more seducing woman was assuming over Cowper's mind. She appealed to his gratitude, and gave him his choice of either renouncing Lady Austen or herself. The sacrifices of a Platonic friendship are as bitter as others; and Cowper must be admired for having decided in favour of the friend, whose cares, it was true, had been everything to him during his long sufferings.

He had not the spirit to pronounce the word adieu; but he wrote to Lady Austen a pathetic letter, expressive of his grief, which ended their connection.

It is said that an attachment of his youth had left on the poet's mind ineffaceable impressions, which were his antidote against every other passion. Some time after having renounced Lady Austen,

he entered into correspondence with one of his cousins, of whom Mrs. Unwin might have been justly jealous, if she had read the following letter, which would have at least demonstrated to her that Cowper stood in need of something at her house; but it would be unjust to make a too rigorous analysis of the tender expressions of a religious poet, who had translated *Con Amore* the mystical works of Madame Guyon.

TO LADY HESKETH.

"I shall see you again. I shall hear your voice. We shall take walks together. I will shew you my prospects, the hovel, the alcove, the Ouse, and its banks, every thing I have described. I anticipate the pleasure of those days not very far distant, and feel a part of it at this moment. Talk not of an inn! Mention it not for your life! We never had so many visitors but we could easily accommodate them all, though we have received Unwin and his wife, and his sister and his son, all at once. My dear, I will not let you come till the end of May, or beginning of June, because before that time my green-house will not be ready to receive us, and it is the only pleasant room belonging to us. When the plants go out, we go in. I line it with mats, and spread the floor with mats; and there you shall sit with a bed of mignionette at your side, and a hedge of honey-suckles, rose, and jessamine; and I will make you a bouquet of myrtle every day. Sooner than the time I mention the country will not be

in complete beauty. And I will tell you what you shall find at your first entrance. Imprimis, as soon as you have entered the vestibule, if you cast a look on either side of you, you shall see on the right hand a box of my making. It is the box in which had been lodged all my hares, and in which lodges Puss at present. But he, poor fellow, is worn out with age, and promises to die before you can see him. On the right hand stands a cupboard, the work of the same author; it was once a dove cage, but I transformed it. Opposite to you stands a table, which I also made; but a merciless servant having scrubbed it until it became paralytic, it serves no purpose now but of ornament; and all my clean shoes stand under it. On the left hand, at the farther end of this superb vestibule, you will find the door of the parlour, into which I will conduct you, and where I will introduce you to Mrs. Unwin, unless we should meet her before, and where we shall be as happy as the day is long. Order yourself, my cousin, to the Swan, at Newport, and there you shall find me ready to conduct you to Olney."

Lady Hesketh came, and afterwards established herself in the neighbourhood. Her consolations soon became of importance to Cowper, who had the mortification to see Mrs. Unwin attacked by a stroke of the palsy. From that moment the life of the poet was no more than a painful struggle against a terrible disorder, from which perhaps he had never been completely emancipated.

The attentions which he endeavoured to pay to

his suffering friend, could not avoid contributing to his own oppression. In December 1796, Mrs. Unwin died. Cowper, who had seen her half an hour before she expired, wished to sit up with her remains during the night; but he had scarcely surveyed her for a few moments when he shuddered and withdrew with a groan of agony. From that time he never pronounced her name; whether it was that he dared not trust himself to pronounce it, or that he had forgotten it in the aberration of his intellect.

In 1799, Cowper appeared to have recovered his reason, and even composed the poem of the *Reprobate;* but it was the dying flame of his genius, which could no longer kindle a ray of joy in his heart. Lady Hesketh continued faithful to her unfortunate friendship, and received his last sigh in 1800.

Cowper is doubly indebted for the greater part of the interest which he inspires to that species of revelation of his most secret thoughts, which is equally discoverable in his poetry and his letters. Who is there that is not pleased with fathoming the internal workings of a man of genius? Who would not share his solitude, and rejoice in the domestic confidence of his weaknesses, combined with that of his most noble inspirations? Such a personage awakens a still greater attachment, if he has never lavished himself on the applauses of the crowd; if he has shunned the brilliant circles of the world, and the academies of the *Beaux Esprits.* Cowper was certainly not without ambition; but the

seclusion to which he had trained himself had become an agreeable habit. He loved the country before he sung its delights. A critic,* whose opinions are sometimes amusing, as a consequence of their eccentricities, finds nothing but affectation in the simplicity of Cowper. He only sees the fields, he says, but through the window; if he goes out a moment, he quickly returns, as if he were afraid of being caught in a shower. *He touches the hand of nature with perfumed gloves*, (it is not Hazlitt who puts this line into italics), and he shows his Vashti to all the world with all the precautions of etiquette, like a *petit maitre*, who gives his hand to a lady to dance a minuet. It is not with this style, which reminds one of the *Precieuses Redicules* that the master spirits, and among others Campbell, have judged the poet of Olney.

"Ah, how willingly would I pass my days and nights in contemplating a beautiful prospect!" says Cowper, in one of his letters. With what a charm he describes his love for the Bee, and for the smallest insect which animates with its presence the lowliest landscape!—It is true that his rural pictures exhibit less variety and less extent than those of Thomson, who studied nature more in the gross than in her details. Thomson, who possessed a more vast and prolific genius with less taste, never knew when to stop; but went beyond the mark. "Cowper," says Campbell, "surveyed

* W. Hazlitt.

human philosophy with a kind of clerical contempt. In his eye the great and little things of the world were reduced to the same level, while he adored the almightiness and the moral purposes of the Being who had created them. This religious indifference does not, however, blunt his susceptibility to the simple beauties of nature; but the places which he loves, associated with his reveries and his tranquil moments, those spots, above all, filled with the presence of the Divinity, who had brought him consolation, appear to him in their naked characteristics far above all the ornaments of poetry. There is less of the ideal in his landscapes than in those of the author of the Seasons; but they possess more of the charm of reality.

Thomson had the ambition to describe the whole earth; Cowper only the cultivated plains which he had seen. There can be no doubt, if the latter had inhabited a country of mountains, precipices, and torrents, that his genius would have amply sufficed for a description of these more savage characteristics.

Thence it was that living in the tranquillity of solitude, and remote from the tumultuous scenes of the world, he prefers in his verses to the richer subjects of fiction and the heroic passions, those subjects of real life, and the confessions of his own sentiments in religion and morality. His sincerity is recognizable in the bold energy and even the negligences and familiarities of his style. The man cannot be separated by those who peruse his works from the poet. His enthusiasm and his

exaggerations have nothing artificial about them. It is perceived that this hermit has lived sufficiently in the world to acquire a certain polish, but that he has withdrawn from it sufficiently early to carry with him more virtue and simplicity than the world allows us to preserve.

Cowper was already of a certain age, when he undertook to become a poet; but his talents had all the freshness and the susceptibility of youth, and even more gaiety than might have been expected from his secluded habits. This combination of sadness or devotion with pleasantry, of profound and occasionally burlesque thoughts, with often witty sallies,—this expression of the capricious contrasts of his humour, with which the inequality of his verse so happily allies itself, imparts to the poetry of Cowper the character of a familiar dialogue, varied with metaphors and turns of expression borrowed from old authors. Cowper had even made it a system to abandon himself to the impulse of the moment; he delighted in moralizing on a singular subject, and in imparting abruptness to his transitions. I should be rather inclined to think that he would have considered it a service to have had a difficult text given to him. The origin of the poem of the *Task* is well known. Lady Austen was a great admirer of the blank verses of Milton, and frequently induced her friend to prefer them to rhyme. She requested him to complete an entire poem in that metre. Cowper promised to obey her, on condition that she supplied the sub-

ject. "Oh!" replied Lady Austen, "you cannot be in want of subjects; all are equally good to you; take this sofa for instance;" and accordingly Cowper composed several thousand verses, in which there is much less said about the sofa than any thing else. This poem has more beauties than are requisite to redeem a more defective plan and many other imperfections of detail; it is sufficient to evidence the peculiar manner of Cowper. Tender or pious sentiments, and eloquence often sublime; interesting allusions to his daily occupations and attachments; little pictures of interiors and charming landscapes are all combined by Cowper within this frame. The first book alone bears the title of *Sofa*, the history of which seldom re-appears after the first hundred verses. One transition leads to another, and the poet changes tone and style at each new subject with incredible facility. When it is recollected that the admiration of Lady Austen for Milton gave birth to the *Task*, one cannot regret that Cowper has not only imitated the manner of the model proposed to him like a great master, but that he has, moreover, dared to parody him with a considerable degree of humour.*

I should be pleased to be enabled to quote successively the description of the arrival of the post;

* For instance, in the enumeration of the different kinds of sleep, which are not comparable to the sleep enjoyed upon the sofa, the same turns of expression are found as in the famous passage of Paradise Lost,

"Sweet is the breath of morn," &c.

It is one of the passages tolerably well translated by Delille.

that of the preparations for tea; that on snow, with the admirable satirical allusion to the ice palaces of the Empress of Russia; winter walks, and a multitude of studies and pictures which appertain to the Flemish school of poetry. Delille has enriched himself as much by the loans he has borrowed from Cowper, as by those which Darwin might legitimately claim.

"Le printems nous disperse et l'hiver nous rallie
* * * *
Oui, l'instruct social est enfant de l'hiver;
En cercle un même altrait rassemble autour de lâtre
La veillesse conteuse, et l'enfance folatre.
La courent a la ronde et les propos joyeaux
Et la veille romance et les amiables jeux;
La, se de dommage aut de ses longues absences
Chacun vient retrouver ses cheres annaissances."

DELILLE LES TROIS REGNES.

The first conception of the whole of this *morceau* is to be found in the Winter Evening, third book of the *Task*, and we must confess if Delille sometimes equal his rival, he is still oftener inferior to him. His profuse or rather his lingering rhymes, are incapable of contending against the bold and original precision of Cowper,—a precision which does not always exclude eloquence, and which is not hostile to noble and graceful imagery, as in the following passages.

"'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat
To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel and not feel the crowd;
To hear the roar she sends thro' all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear

"Thus sitting and surveying thus at ease
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
To some secure and more than mortal height,
That liberates and exempts me from them all.
It turns submitted to my view, turns round
With all its generations. I behold
The tumult and am still. The sound of war
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;
Grieves but alarms me not. I mourn the pride
And avarice, that make man wolf to man;
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats
By which he speaks the language of his heart,
And sigh but never tremble at the sound.
He travels and expatiates, as the bee
From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
The manners, customs, policy of all
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
He sucks intelligence in every clime,
And spreads the honey of his deep research
At his return, a rich repast for me."

In his lines addressed to the *Hollow Oak of Yardley*, Cowper elevates himself to meditations of the highest philosophy, and in his Ode upon the *Loss of the Royal George*, he has taken a Pindaric flight. There is not less *verve* in his satires. There is the measured tone of good company, combined at the same time with the unshackled indignation of virtue. He has accused himself of having sometimes written under the inspiration of bile; but whatever is to be found in him of too harsh and mordant, is sufficiently excusable, inasmuch as he never had to reproach himself with a single personality. Voltaire* was already dead, when Cowper painted him in the following terms:

* This man, born for the misfortunes of many other men, erected a temple to God, and endeavoured to vilify and ridicule his Holy Word.

It is known that Voltaire built a church at Ferney with this inscription; Deo immortali, Voltaire.

"Nor he, who for the bane of thousands born,
Built God a church and laughed his word to scorn."

Moreover, it might be permitted to religious poets to overstep somewhat in attacking an enemy of Christianity. Cowper was, in the main, rather intolerant; he must have written under the dictation of the bigoted and superstitious Mrs. Unwin, whose scruples were of a narrow class; he suffers a real inclination to controversy to transpire through his religious subjects.

The detached poems of Cowper are remarkable for their ease, invention, and vigour. Not but that vulgar expressions occasionally escape him, and even some conceits in rather bad taste, but the verses which he composed on the day when he received the portrait of his mother are irreproachable. They display the purest and most affecting language of filial piety, and of the recollections of infancy.

"Oh that those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smiles I see,
The same, that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else, how distinct they say,
'Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!'
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
Oh welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidd'st me honour, with an artless tongue
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
I will obey not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own;

And while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream that thou art she.
My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Perhaps thou gavest me unseen a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah! that maternal smile, it answers—yes."

But I must stop here; it is an easier task to sympathize with the poet, than to express at second hand all which his amiable sensibility inspires.

I will only say one word more of Cowper; it will relate to the translation of the Iliad. It is more literal, but not more faithful than that of Pope. With the exception of some passages vigorously translated, Homer would not be able to recognise himself again, and would be tempted to believe the whole a parody. His magnificence and his poetical simplicity are equally lost. It reminds us of the Dutch painter, who aspired to supply a faithful idea of Apelles, while unfortunately the model was still in existence.

"Trois milles ans ont passé sur la cendre de Homere,
Et depuis trois milles ans, Homere respecté,
Est jeune encore de gloire et d'immortalité."

M. J. Chenier.

Of all the English poets, the individual who has shown himself the most of a Greek in his verses, inspired at once by the choice of the subject, and by classical associations, is Glover, the author of "Leonidas." Mason, the author of the "English

Garden," was, also, very happily embued with the spirit of the models of antiquity; but these two names remind us of the reign of George II., and of a class of *literati* with whom Cowper has very little analogy. His biographer, Hayley, who survived him, belonged rather to the school of Mason than to that of the poet of Ferney; but Hayley, is now-a-days better known by his respectful friendship for Cowper, than by his own productions. Some of his sonnets, however, express grand, ingenious, or tender thoughts with dignity.

LETTER LXII.

TO M. V. GUEBIN.

In 1758, when the imitators of Pope's school continued to fatigue the ears by the monotony of a hundred poetical common places, dressed up in a hundred modes, a coterie, a suddenly usurped ephemeral vogue, by substituting the affectation and conceits of Italian literature, degenerated by celebrating platonic love, sentimental friendship, and a pretended enthusiasm for nature, for the antithesis and elegant conciseness of the classical models. The coterie *Della Crusca* was an associa-

tion of *beaux esprits* and equivocal females, metamorphosed into the shepherds and shepherdesses of *saloons*.

> " Formés sur la brillant modele
> De ces bergers galans qu'a chante Fontenelle."

Like Don Quixote and Sancho, adopting the names of Quichoti and Pancino, Mr. Merry signed Della Crusca; Mrs. Robinson, Laura Maria; Mrs. Piozzi, Anna Matilda, Adney Yenda; another Carlos, &c. Distributing afterwards their various parts, one was to perform Horace, and proved his title by epistles to his friends, and odes to the moon; the other became an Anacreon, and wrote stanzas to Delia; Mrs. Robinson was surnamed the English Sappho. This free academy was founded at Florence, where chance had brought together Mr. Merry, Mrs. Piozzi, and Mrs. Robinson.

Mr. Merry appertained to a family of magistrates; he was, at first, intended for the bar, but afterwards having purchased a commission, and succeeding to an independent fortune, he took up his residence in Italy, after having made the tour of the divers capitals of Europe. Retained, as it is said, at Florence by love, he devoted himself, while there, to the study of the Italian language, and was received as a member of the celebrated academy of *Della Crusca*, the name of which, with singular poetic pedantry, he adopted.

Mrs. Piozzi had become the wife by a first marriage of a rich brewer, Mr. Thrale, whose house

the famous Dr. S. Johnson much frequented. At the death of her husband, she retired to Bath, and kept up a correspondence with her literary friend; but they quarrelled on his disapproval of her marriage with Piozzi, a music master, whom Mrs. Piozzi carried with her to Florence. She there became acquainted with the female adventurer, Mrs. Robinson, who, at first, in the character of an agreeable courtezan, and afterwards in that of a seducing actress, had captivated, by turns, a royal prince and the man of the people, the famous Fox, a conquest not less illustrious.

This *coterie* made a collection of its verses, to which Mrs. Piozzi wrote the preface; and shortly after these fugitive pieces were confided in detail to the literary journals of London, where the Anacreons and Sapphos found complaisant puffers. The adventure of the *Meiromanie* was revived: Anna Matilda, in the character of an invisible muse, inspired by her verses alone some unknown author with a tender passion, which, for a considerable time, exhausted itself in reciprocal sonnets.

It must be confessed, that in the midst of the affectation of Mrs. Piozzi and Robinson, some harmonious couplets and ingenious thoughts are met with; some sentiments tolerably delicate, and expressed in a graceful manner; but in the height of the greatest intoxication of all these little successes, a satirical voice was suddenly heard—that of Mr. Gifford—which devoted to ridicule all the poetry of the new Parnassus without exception. The Baviad, followed by the

Meviad, appeared and effected the disenchantment of all such as had been induced to admire the odes, sonnets, epistles, &c. of Merry and his muses.

The Baviad is a witty paraphrase of the first satire of Persius.

"Oh curas hominum; O quantum est in rebus inane."

But it possesses all the terseness of Juvenal, with a little more decency, and less declamation in expression. The marginal notes compose a commentary still more malicious than the text, and reveal a multitude of little personal details, or comprise quotations, which demonstrate all the enormity of the offenders, whom the poet chastises with his inexorable pen.

It is not alone the Florentine coteries which is branded with the derisive epithets of Gifford; but the satire reviews, in this new Dunciad, the degenerate dramatic authors, such as O'Keefe, Morton, and Reynolds, and demonstrates their trite absurdity. The Meviad is but the supplement to the Baviad, and it was the *coup de grace* to all those poets who had clamoured in the first instance, that Mr. Gifford was but the slave, hired to pursue with his insults the triumphal car of their victory. This double satire excites but little interest in the present day. In order to survive the circumstances which give it birth, it is requisite that this species of poem should paint the ridiculous features of manners rather than of mind. Lord Byron

was inspired by the mockery of the Baviad and the Meviad, when he composed his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.* Unfortunately, all the decisions of Byron have not been confirmed like those of Mr. Gifford. The Dunciad * of Pope was the common model of both.

The English have often succeeded in the department of satire; but their satires, more energetic than ingenious, are also more affluent in invectives than in *piquantes* allusions. They may be reproached with all the defects which the English critics have themselves discovered in Juvenal; while they are less obscure than the Latin poet, because they call things by their own names more freely than he, they either descend into a coarse familiarity, or plunge into a style of inflation when they attempt to rise. Under pretence of stripping vice of its deceitful mask and cloak, they lay bare to the eye, with a frequently indecent license, the nakedness of its lineaments. This branch of English literature, is, in short, one of the most faithful *indices* of the national character, and deserves being studied in the burlesque epopee of Hudibras, in the political satires of Dryden, the elegant imitations of Donne and Horace, by Pope, and that of Juvenal by Johnson, &c.

Mr. Gifford has translated Juvenal into English verse, with a happy freedom of expression,

* Lord Byron, as a satirist, appears to owe still greater obligations to the caustic energy of the poet Churchill, author of the Rosciad.

which does not exclude poetical merit. He has published excellent editions of Massinger, of Ben Jonson and Shirley; but he is more especially known as the principal editor of the *Quarterly Review*—and he has renounced poetry, in order to give the law to poets. Poetry first drew him from an obscure condition. Born of poor parents, and left an orphan at an early age, he was bound apprentice to a shoemaker.

Some illustrious patrons favoured his taste for study by getting him admitted to the University of Oxford.

In order to evince that he had every kind of right to protest, in the name of taste, against the bathos and pathos of the disciples of *Della Crusca*, Mr. Gifford introduced into his notes on the Meviad, two elegies, replete with grace and sentiment. That which commences with these words—

"I wish I was where Anna lies,"

exhibits an affecting simplicity, which reminds one of the regret of the two young princes for Imogine, in the play of *Cymbeline*.

There is another satirist, somewhat fallen into oblivion latterly, but whose buffooneries, and sometimes whose cynicism, have made a stir in their time. I refer to Dr. Walcot, commonly called Peter Pindar, who has given to satire the form of an ode. But he should rather be considered as a parodist than a satirist, and take his rank among the class of poetical caricaturists.

Peter Pindar is the Cobbett and Gillray of modern English poetry. In the character of a physician, and for some time in that of an ecclesiastic, Dr. Walcot has more real affinity with Rabelais in his taste for the burlesque. He is possessed by an actual passion for parody: he rails at kings, but he does not spare the people. He rains down his torrent of rhyming sarcasms on poets, authors, and painters; but he lavishes them with equal good will on professional critics. Did not Peter Pindar partake more of the buffoon than the libeller, an epitaph, like that composed on Aretin, might be composed for him:—

"Qui giace l'Aretin poeta Tosco
Che disse mal d'ognun fuorche di Cristo
Scusandosi col dir: no lo conosco."

"Here lies Aretin, the Tuscan poet, who has libelled all the world excepting his Saviour, for which he excused himself by saying that he did not know him."

The mind grows fatigued with these continual palinodies, with this derisive impartiality. It is asked, for the advantage of what virtue is it that the satanic buffoon wages war? To Peter Pindar might be readily applied the moral of Fontaine's fable of the *Laughers;* but if you open at hazard a collection of these burlesque verses; if you read one of the arguments, and commence a poem, you are carried on by its real *verve*, and by a facility of versification, which prompts an excuse for the

defect of elegance, and the gross tone of divers of the traits of humour.

Poor Mrs. Piozzi is one of the victims of the Pindaric doctor. The prosy tittle tattle of this friend of Johnson is transferred by him into rhyme, and contrasted with the sometimes not less puerile verbiage of Boswell, who enacted the part of a kind of *Cornac* to the illustrious pedant. The science of Sir Joseph Banks did not inspire him with more respect. This grave president of the Royal Academy is represented as maintaining the thesis, that fleas appertain to the family of lobsters. But even Pliny and Buffon would not have escaped being devoted to the ridicule of this determined laugher. Peter Pindar is especially inexorable towards the painters and Benjamin West. He versifies the catalogues of the exhibition with a humiliating irony, or with a not less unsparing veracity. At length, audaciously penetrating to the fire side of George III., he catches up his royal expressions, and translates them into his burlesque language: he traduces his majesty, and gives him no more than a secondary part to play in an epopee, of which the hero is a certain uncleanly insect, for which French delicacy, happy as it is in poetical designations, has not even deigned to invent one of those characteristic paraphrases, by virtue of which the animal, which lives on acorns, and other beasts whom the Almighty names in Genesis, are not altogether excluded from our poems. A louse, since it is necessary to call it by its name, is the Eneas or

Turnus of the *Lousiad*. The poet has not pushed his radicalism so far as to surprise his hero beneath the shelter of the royal wig; but *(horresco referens)* he compromises all the heads of the palace, and subjects the whole army of cooks and scullions to the operations of having their heads shaved. The fact is an unlucky piece of history: a louse had been discovered by George III. on his plate. Peter Pindar imparts to the insect all the emotions which the monarch in his turn experiences; he lavishes comparisons and metaphors. The horror felt by the king is equal to that with which he had been previously inspired, by the blow which Fox had attempted to strike at the royal authority, by the critical analysis made by Burke of the expences of the civil list. The heart of his majesty, bounding with indignation in his bosom, is compared to a dumpling tossing amidst the boiling surges of the saucepan. These allusions and comparisons are not, throughout, of very exquisite humour; but they raise a laugh, like a bad farce, from the very circumstance of their deficiency in common sense. The digressions are occasionally original: the action never languishes, and some details evince the poet. At length, by sovereign decree, the head cook and his satellites suffer their docile heads to be peacefully shaved. In fine, the *Lousiad* may be ranked much beneath the *Batrachomyomachia*, the *Secchia Rapita*, the *Lutrin*, and all the other epopees founded on puerile and vulgar subjects; but the *Lousiad*, like *George the Third's Visit to Whitbread's Brewery*,

another poem of the same species, and more comic, to my view, is a curious exemplification of the liberty of the press in England. What has become of the times in which Elizabeth caused an unlucky radical, who had vented his spleen against her in a pamphlet, to have his hand cut off for the offence? It is true that the constitutional society, and the hypocritical inquisition for the suppression of vice, did not exist at the period when Peter Pindar was in vogue.

It is affirmed that the radical Homer, and the Juvenal of the Baviad, once had an altercation, which seriously compromised the shoulders of both, for they were near having recourse to the cane; but the quarrel went no farther than the prefatory menace.

Without directly refuting the democratic buffooneries of Peter Pindar, the tories, as early as the first year of the French revolution, possessed their aristocratic parodists. The journal called the *Anti-Jacobin* inserted them. Canning was one of the poets of this counter-opposition. His dialogue between the *Friend of Humanity and the Knife Grinder*, and which has supplied Sir W. Scott with the epigraph of Nigel, is a humourous anti-demagogical squib. His *New Code of Morality*, a satire on the philanthropy and other self-dubbed virtues of the revolution, is deficient neither in animation nor in poetry. It is true that Canning therein breathes that hatred against France, which his object was to convert into a virtue, in default of other political virtues. He distinguishes,

therein, several *memorabilia* of 1797, the epoch when this little publication appeared. Canning has also rhymed in favour of the Greeks. Should he become minister, we shall see what he will do for the Greeks and for Ireland.

Messrs. Frere* and Smith, fellow contributors with Canning, have since written an exclusively literary parody, called, *The Rejected Addresses*, to which I shall have occasion to refer. Thomas Moore has also his satirical burlesques, and Scotland has produced a pretty comic poem, by Tennant, *(Anster Fair)* which has more than one point of resemblance with the *Secchia Rapita*, &c.

LETTER LXIII.

TO MR. TAGES, D. M.

THERE is a current anecdote, of which more than one edition has been already got up, in order to flatter the vanity of the English people. When a given continental sovereign, the Emperor Alexander, for instance, makes his entry into London, amidst crowds, which here, as elsewhere, obstruct the passage of the great man of the earth, it is

* To whom is attributed also the *Monks and the Giants*, essay of a Poem Chivalresque and Burlesque.]

always taken for granted that the said foreign prince has asked, "Where is the lower class? Where are the poor?" to which the given response is—"Sire, there are none." John Bull, who always peruses in the papers the description of the festivities, in which he has sustained a part, and collects from them such *on dits* as he has not himself heard, begins to crow at this answer, and imagines that he constitutes the only people in Europe which is not apparelled in rags. Unfortunately, it is proved to demonstration, that more than 300,000 families in England receive charity yearly, and that the poor tax amounts to more than seven millions sterling. God only knows how many groans of poverty arise to his ear, from this isle, which is so boastful of its wealth! Accordingly, in their moments of candour, its public writers are driven to confess,* that the real and permanent prosperity of a nation is not to be estimated by the extent of its domains, the number of its population, and the amount of its revenues.

This external prosperity, like the antediluvian earth of Burnet's beautifully philosophical dream, may be, indeed, a brilliant and fertile superficies, but nothing but a superficies, covering the waters of the deep, and never appearing more flourishing than the evening before the inevitable deluge occurs to swallow it up for ever.

* See article on the poor, in the 15th volume of the *Quarterly Review*.

The wound which gradually undermines the vital strength of England, is, doubtless, incurable; but the palliatives of a sound policy may indefinitely prolong its existence, in despite of the prophetic calculations of the economists. The compulsory impost which luxury pays to indigence, sufficiently demonstrates the power of the *proletaires;* but while this impost is insufficient, it retains the menacing majority of the people in a habit of dependence, and divests it of all energy by humiliation; for idleness also claims its share in the distribution of the tax. This justice must be done the government and the English philanthropists: they have perceived the constantly increasing degradation of the mass of the people, and have set on foot a vast plan of public education, to arrest its progress among the rising generation. I will one day say a few words to you about the different systems which have been adopted; it is my intention now merely to state that the English people has also its rags and its vices. You would be, perhaps, horrified, were I to quote Mr. Colquhoun's book on the metropolitan police; I shall limit myself at present to the exhibition of the picture in the mirror of poetry. It is the poets of the inferior classes to whom I am about to direct your attention.

The Rev. George Crabbe is a respectable minister of the gospel, whose tranquil life supplies no matter for biographical anecdote. His talent has not impelled him to enter the tumultuous stage of the world: he has been faithful to his

flock, as well as to his muse; and he has even (a circumstance not unworthy commemoration,) imposed silence on the latter for thirty-five years. His first poems date from 1783. Mr. Crabbe was almost forgotten in 1808. Fortunately all his poetry was not; and his literary resurrection was hailed with general acclamation. It was remembered that the smile of Johnson and Burke had encouraged his *debut*, and his preface informed the world that his new productions had charmed the dying moments of Fox.

Although Mr. Crabbe be obviously of Cowper's school, he has also a peculiar style and peculiar system. Mr. Crabbe, decidedly one of the greatest poets of the day, would seem to have never written any thing but inculpation of poetry. He has taken literally the common allegation against the muse, that she only lives by lies, and has made it a point of conscience to refute her. It is not, indeed, in the fantastic country of enchantments, and under the windows of palaces, that he has dared to declare war against her. He has established his battery on a certain prosaic region, where the illusions of her witchcraft are more easily dissipated and annulled; and where, according to his view, her enchantments appeared most fatal. It matters little to him whether or not she flatter the powerful and the rich: but he forbids her to diffuse her gilding and perfume over the dwellings of the poor, lest she may so interdict them from pity and instruction. While following Mr. Crabbe

through *The Village* or *The Borough*, beneath the villager's roof, or along the aisles of the cemetery, I picture to myself an old priest of the age of ignorance and chivalry, whom superstitious serfs would have appealed to, in order to banish, by his exorcisms, the fairy or hobgoblin of the village. Mr. Crabbe also reminds me of the catholic priest, by his profound knowledge of the human heart. None of the secrets of self-love escape him: he seizes the most complicated thread of the tissue of instincts, varieties, and passions, which go to constitute the human character. It would seem as if he had collected, by means of auricular confession, the avowals of a hundred different hearts.

Mr. Crabbe, in his descriptions and portraits, does not, therefore, employ himself solely on the subject of externals, like the Flemish painters: he, like them, is careful of mechanical and minute exactness of costume, of his groupes, and the disposal of his lights and shades: but he, moreover, imparts so true and expressive a physiognomy to his personages, that they are never lost sight of, for the sake of admiring the mere accessories. It must be, however, admitted, with the critics, that his poetry affects sometimes, by overlaying the details, an air of technical precision. Although capable of embracing a vast circumference of subject, he too often prefers contracting himself within a narrow framework, and in his study of man, he more readily attaches himself to the individual than to the species. He is rather literal

than natural, as Hazlitt has said, to whom he has supplied materials for one of his most singular criticisms.

"He takes an inventory of the human heart exactly in the same manner as of the furniture of a sick room; his sentiments have very much the air of fixtures; he gives you the petrifaction of a sigh, and carves a tear to the life in stone. Almost all his characters are tired of their lives, and you heartily wish them dead. They remind one of anatomical preservations; and may be said to bear the same relation to actual life, that a stuffed cat, in a glass case, does to the real one purring on the hearth."

In the desire to amuse by his ridiculous metaphors, Hazlitt has set out on the fallacious supposition that Mr. Crabbe meant to write pastorals. Mr. Crabbe had no such intention, even when depicting the rural labourer. If Don Quixote had known no other shepherds than those of Crabbe, he would never have added to his other absurdities, that of desiring to carry a crook. But it is certain that his taste for depicting the vulgar personages of real life, according to their costume, their ignoble sentiments, and their familiar language, leads him into too prosaic negligences of style. In aiming to be energetic, he is no more than trite; and his too denuded images inspire a kind of repugnance. His habit of tracing the moral deformities, with the fidelity of an anatomist, imparts to some of his compositions an air of bitterness and invective. It is obvious

that he takes delight in the strokes of a caustic raillery: and, without imbibing any doubt of his philanthropy, one might be tempted to suspect that there was more contempt than love in his pity; for the objects of his pity are, at the same time, the victims of his satire. It is he whom Sir W. Scott designates, in one of his novels, as the English Juvenal. I should, for my part, rather designate him as the La Rochefoucault of the inferior classes. Poor human nature is only ridiculous, according to him, when it pretends to the heroism and sublimity of the virtues. Accordingly, no one is less sentimental than Mr. Crabbe. The undecorated beauty of the country does not even inspire it but seldom. Bathed in the sweat of the peasant's brow, it is, to his view, equally deprived of its enchantments as the village. But after all, poetical in spite of himself, Mr. Crabbe attaches us to him, not only by his magic talent of observation, his depth, and the sagacity of his remarks, but also by the infinitude of his sketches of nature, by his scenes of a heart-rending pathos, by his graceful pictures, and even by the sublime flights of a decidedly lyric poetry. It would be difficult to make war on imagination with more imagination. I shall continue the analysis of his distinguished talent at the same time as that of his principal works; my quotations will occasionally appear exceptions from his system; but these exceptions are numerous, and have given popularity to his verses.

The *Village* was the origin of Mr. Crabbe's

reputation. The aim of the poet is to prove, that the villager of real life has no point of resemblance with those of poetry; that, in point of fact, indigence possesses no constituent but what is extremely unpleasing; and that vice is not exclusively an inhabitant of the palaces of the wealthy. The description of the barren sands of the sea coast, where the author lays his scene, prepares the reader for the new aspect under which he will have to survey the objects usually embellished by the delusive colours of the muse:—

"Lo! where the heath with withering brake grown o'er,
Lend the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sands appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its withered ears;
Rank weeds that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye;
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies, nodding, mock the hope of toil—
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The shiny willow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shir the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares, clings round the sickly blade;
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around."

It is on this ungrateful soil that Crabbe looks for the simple charms of the pastoral life; but he finds there nothing but rapine, outrage, and terror. A bold, gloomy, artful, and savage race have there abandoned the labours of agriculture

for those of a guilty traffic. These men, corrupted thus by a thirst for illegal gain, lurk on the shore, and at the approach of a tempest, rivet their greedy eyes on the first vessel, which, driven at the mercy of the billows, is destined to become either their prey, or that of the ocean. The existence of these smugglers, and that of their accomplices, is described with frightful reality. The interior of the workhouse exhibits a not less striking picture. The apothecary, the curate, an old friend of the village children, the nobleman, and the magistrate, are depicted with infinite art. I shall confine myself to quoting the sarcasm levelled against the latter; it is one of those traits of satire which do not always confer honour on the taste of Mr. Crabbe:—

"Lo! at his throne the silent nymph appears,
Trait by her shape, but modest in her tears;
And while he stands abashed, with conscious eye,
Some favourite female of her judge glides by;
Who views, with scornful glance, the strumpet's fate,
And thanks the stars that made her keeper great."

The same idea is found expressive in an episode of the sixteenth canto of *Don Juan*; it is curious to compare with the severe satires of the reverend poet, the mixture of trifling mockery and pathos in which the poetical nobleman launches a malicious arrow, *en passant*, at his rivals, and deplores the misfortune of the poor girl, in not having addressed herself to the titled tartufes, to whom the

Society for the Suppression of Vice has confided the guardianship of morals.*

The *register of the village* forms the materials of Mr. Crabbe's first poem. After some reflections upon the morals of the inhabitants, and the furniture of their houses, by way of introduction, the poet divides his subject into three books, entitled Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths. It comprises the history of all the individuals whom he has baptized, married, and buried in the course of the preceding year. This extremely simple frame-work contains a new gallery of portraits, each finished in its own peculiar manner. If one wished to banter the reverend minister, he might be accused of having traced the scandalous register of his parish. The first child brought to him for baptism, is the illegitimate offspring of the miller's daughter. She has yielded her all to the love of a jolly tar, but the father has never been willing to ratify their union; he has driven his daughter from her home, and passes his time in the company of prostitutes. Lucy's lover embarks for sea, in the hope of becoming rich enough for the maintenance of both; but he dies on the voyage, and the unfortunate girl remains exposed to all the miseries of her situation, not excepting the gossip of the place, which Mr. Crabbe takes care not to forget. The conclusion of the history is affecting. Mr. Crabbe subsequently introduces a frugal couple, next a ridiculous linen-draper, and then a woman of the

* "Presuming partridges and pretty wenches."
Don Juan, chap. xii. st. 61.

town, &c. But I shall proceed to the more interesting book of the marriages. In this, Mr. Crabbe amuses himself at the expense of an old bachelor, who has married his servant; and he is not less facetious on the subject of divers other domestic establishments. He only recovers a portion of his charity, in order to lament the fate of Phebe Dawson, the most innocent and most beautiful of all the village girls, and previous to the fatal "yes," caressed with the hypocritical homage of her lover, who turns out to be the most brutal of husbands.

To do justice, it would be requisite to translate the entire book of deaths. It is not the gloomy satire of Young, to whom some malicious wag sent a skull, containing a lighted taper, in order to serve him for a lanthorn. The satirical gaiety of Mr. Crabbe does not abandon him while reviewing the various names which replenish the obituary. He sketches a variety of *piquant* portraits, among which is remarked that of an old publican, always intoxicated: the widow, and the lady of the manor, whose funeral takes place at the village, though her death has occurred in town. This pompous ceremony has no dazzling effect on the rigid minister; he denounces the insensibility of the weeping friends, and calls the funeral procession a bad company of tragedians, who are incapable of acting grief in such a way as to provoke the sympathy of the spectators. It appears that the defunct was in the habit of spending all her income in town; and had even, for a

considerable time, abandoned her country seat. Subjoined is the description of it, which it is curious to compare with that of the castle of Hassan in the *Giaour*.

"Forsaken stood the hall,
Worm ate the floors: the tapestry fled the wall.
No fire the kitchen's cheerless grate displayed;
No cheerful light the long closed sash conveyed;
The crawling worm that turns a summer fly,
Here spun his shroud and laid him up to die
The winter death; upon the bed of state,
The bat, shrill shrieking, woo'd his flickering mate;
To empty rooms the curious came no more,
From empty cellars turned the angry poor,
And surly beggars cursed the ever bolted door;
To one small room the steward found his way,
Where tenants followed to complain and pay."

All these detached fragments furnish a very imperfect idea of the picture of which they compose a part. I dare not, therefore, give extracts from the history of the old maid, with respect to whose virtue Mr. Crabbe permits a little *trait* of scandal to escape. The peasant Asliford obtains more free eulogium.

The misfortunes of Robin Dengley are related with a truly poetic pathos; the little rivalries of the midwife and Dr. Glibb follow. The minister concludes his list of the dead with the narrative of the funeral of Roger Cuff the marine; but the passing bell is still tolling—it is for him who has tolled it for so many others, it announces the death of the sexton. Old Dibble has been in the service of five rectors before Mr. Crabbe, who seizes the opportunity thus offered of connecting

their history with his own. The colours with which he depicts them are more *piquant* than charitable. But I forget that Mr. Crabbe does not celebrate imaginary heroes.

The *Library* and the *Journal*, published at the same time as the *Village*, are not less demonstrative of the talent of the poet. These two works are, indeed, exempt from the defects of the former; but on account of the subject, they display fewer striking passages. Two little pieces of Mr. Crabbe's deserve notice, *Sir Eustace Grey* and the *Gipsey*.

In *Sir Eustace Grey*, the author has depicted a man whose faults and misfortunes have plunged him into the most terrible madness, but gradually mitigated by a kind of enthusiastical devotion, which only constitutes another form of his mental malady. *Sir Eustace* himself is made, with admirable energy of language and sentiment, to give an account of his delirium; he imagines himself to be hurried away by the rapid flight of two evil genii, with whom he stops on an immense plain, the silence and immobility of which display a frightful contrast with the agitation of his soul. The idea which he endeavours to give of it exhibits one of the most original conceptions of eternity.

This poem and that of the *Gypsey* are written in octave rhymes, and remind one often of the rapid movements of the lyrical strophe. In the *Gypsey*, or the law court, *Salle de Justice*, the expression of remorse, and the discoveries of the miserable mother, excite emotions of pity as strong

as those of any tragedy. These emotions are indeed of too heart-rending a description.

But if Mr. Crabbe sometimes makes an ill use of a pathetic situation, he is capable of inspiring a more tender sympathy when describing the tranquil decline of a virtuous old age, the calm joy of pious resignation, and the sentiments of an innocent affection.

The *Borough* will supply us when necessary with numerous examples; this poem is the continuation of the *Village*, or the developement of the same system upon a large scale. It is a kind of moral history of a sea-port of the second order; the picturesque description of the spot chosen for the scene, and the portrait of the amphibious manners of the different classes of inhabitants. The author still confines himself within the limited circle of reality, although his views became enlarged with the enlarged range of his horizon. There are sublime inspirations from which Mr. Crabbe cannot divest himself in presence of the immensity of ocean; the colours of his picture of a storm are so correct, that it would seem as if, in order to become a witness of its prototype, he had caused himself to be bound to the mast, like Joseph Vernet. The atmosphere, of a similar landscape, has doubtless imparted to his graphic touch an equal felicity in the portraiture of the passions. Not but that the greater number of his verses is not as usual consecrated to minute details and subtle analysis of characters, often but little interesting. His gaiety is not always in good tone.

He is alternately diffuse and obscure, through his affected precision: but what a number of *traits* of refined irony, of smiling and agreeable images, of graceful or energetic sentiments, redeem those defects in a poem of considerable length. The *Borough* is divided into letters. We successively become acquainted with the vicar and curate of the place, with the dissenter, with the principal electors and candidates of an election day, with the lawyers, respecting whom Mr. Crabbe has not consulted Mr. Cottu, with the physicians, the apothecaries, and, in the self-same chapter, with the quacks. In another gallery figure the artizans, the strolling players, the amateur artists, the publicans, the governors of the hospital, and the overseers of the poor. But it is especially of the latter class that Mr. Crabbe is the historian, or rather the biographer, in the poor houses, the prisons, and the schools.

Since the appearance of this poem, Mr. Crabbe has published a series of poetic tales, which might have been incorporated with it in the form of episodes. They are written in the same spirit, though the heroes of some of them are chosen from the middle walk of life. In his last work, the *Tales of the Hall*, the author introduces his readers to elegant society; and here he shews himself to be as profound an observer of human nature as in his delineations of more homely scenes. The tales in the volume to which I have just alluded, are for the most part extremely simple; but in many instances they display originality of conception. I was particularly pleased with the one entitled the

Parting Hour. It is the history of a young couple who have loved each other from childhood, but whose mutual poverty proves an obstacle to their union. Allen Booth, the lover, leaves his native land to try his fortune in America; but he is captured by the Spaniards and conveyed to Mexico, where in the course of time he forgets his Judith and marries another. However, after the lapse of forty years he loses his wife, and yields to his irresistible desire of seeing the land of his birth, and revisiting the scenes of his early love. But how are those scenes changed! He finds himself a stranger, forgotten or unknown. There is, however, an aged widow, who, hearing of his adventures, expresses a wish to see him. This is no other than Judith, who has never ceased to cherish the recollection of her plighted faith, and who, after anxiously awaiting the return of her lover for ten years, was betrayed into an unhappy marriage by a false report of his death. She is now a widow, and her children are scattered about in various parts of the world. The two lovers meet. Neither age nor sorrow have diminished their affection; and both listen with melancholy interest to the recital of their mutual misfortunes. The farewell scene, the description of Allen's return, and the history of his adventures, all impart a degree of dramatic interest to this drama, and it leaves a feeling of delightful melancholy in the mind of the reader.

Edward Shore is an equally pleasing little poem. Edward is a young enthusiast, whose talents afford

the fairest promise; but the indecision of his opinions and conduct proves fatal to his fortune and his happiness. He falls in love with an amiable and accomplished young female; but his circumstances prevent him from cherishing any idea of marriage. He therefore withdraws himself from her society, and becomes an inmate in the house of a friend, a sort of philosopher, who has recently married a wife considerably younger than himself. Relying confidently on his wife's virtue, and on the honour of his young friend, he leaves them to enjoy each other's society, and to walk out together by moonlight, while he retires to his favourite studies.

The young bride soon begins to draw a comparison between her husband and his friend, which unfortunately happens to be wholly to the advantage of the latter, who

> "—— Wore no wig; no grisly beard was seen;
> And none beheld him careless or unclean."

But what proves most fatal to the husband is the circumstance of his being surprised asleep. This idea, which I never before saw expressed either in verse or prose, is thus rendered by the poet.

> "We indeed have heard
> Of sleeping beauty, and it has appeared;
> 'Tis seen in infants; there indeed we find
> The features soften'd by the slumbering mind;
> But other beauties, when disposed to sleep,
> Should from the eye of keen inspector keep:

The lovely nymph who would her swain surprise,
May close her mouth, but not conceal her eyes:
Sleep from the fairest face some beauty takes,
And all the homely features homelier makes;
So thought our wife, beholding with a sigh
Her sleeping spouse, and Edward smiling by."

Like Francisca di Rimini and Paul, they at length yield to temptation. The husband, faithful to his philosophy, coolly renounces the friendship of Edward, and consigns him to the punishment of his own conscience. He is, however, cruelly avenged. All Edward's romantic dreams speedily vanish. In the hope of diverting away the misery of remorse, he courts the society of trivial and even profligate companions. His virtuous enthusiasm forsakes him, and he wastes his health and income without recovering his peace of mind. He is thrown into prison, whence he is released by an unknown benefactor; and he soon learns that this is no other than the friend whose confidence he repaid by treachery. This humiliation completely overwhelms his proud spirit, and he loses his reason. But I must here close my letter, for I find that an analysis of Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall* would lead me too far. In this work he has not disdained to employ what I believe he has himself termed the artificial ornaments of poetry; but that which might be deemed high colouring in the writings of others is merely simple grace in the poetry of Crabbe. Love, that passion which the poet seemed to contemn in his early lays, has frequently lent its romantic charm to the more recent productions of his muse, and

the reverend pastor occasionally reminds one of Anacreon binding his grey hair with flowers.

In spite of the animadversions of Hazlitt, who is the Pasquin of contemporary English critics, and notwithstanding the system which Crabbe himself professed in the prefaces to his earliest productions, it must be acknowledged that few poets have displayed greater brilliancy of imagination. However, his writings, like those of all other English poets, are exceedingly unequal.

LETTER LXIV.

TO M. J. B. AUG. SOULIE.

Now that poetry is no longer, as it was in the days of the bards and druids, a language of the initiated—at a period when the poetic muse actively participates in the interests of society, and even in politics, a poet like Mr. Wordsworth is a being apart, who addresses himself to adepts rather than to readers. He has, like Richardson, had the honour of being recommended from the pulpit, for Mr. Irving has recently pronounced an eloquent eulogium on one of his poems.

I know not whether this consecration of talent by religion, would, to an ordinary poet, make amends for the indifference of the majority of

readers, and the periodical ridicule of the reviews; but Wordsworth, like all men of a naturally contemplative turn of mind, writes rather for himself than for the public, and is easily consoled for the injustice of his contemporaries. A genius like his feels a consciousness of its own power, and in obeying the impulses of that genius, the poet finds in his own heart, if not the only encouragement he desires, at least that which serves to defend him against the piercing shafts of raillery. A rival poet unfortunately joined the tribe of critics, who make the philosophy of Wordsworth a subject of ridicule. Lord Byron contemplates nature and society in so different a point of view, that he must often be in direct contradiction to the lake poet; but it was not generous to feign so much contempt for a writer, from whom he condescended to borrow some of his ideas. Wordsworth's *Evening Sketches* undoubtedly furnished the groundwork of the third canto of *Childe Harold.*

Out of a thousand persons who read Lord Byron, there are ten who read Wordsworth; but out of these ten, there are, perhaps, six who assign to him the very highest rank among poets. In England, if you enquire who Wordsworth is, you will be answered by two or three stanzas of *Don Juan*, in which he is denounced as a fool; or you will, perhaps, be told that he is a man who once held a situation in the stamp office; that about thirty years ago, he published some ballads for children; that he has since produced a dull

poem, the hero of which is a common vagrant. He does not indite verses to *Chloris*, but he writes forty sonnets on one streamlet; addresses lines to the linnet, the red-breast, the lark, the cuckoo, the daisy, and the hawthorn; describes, over and over again, the scenery of the little English Switzerland, and is exceedingly fond of speculating on the instinct of children and idiots.

Yet this is the very man whom Walter Scott, Southey, and Coleridge, extol as the greatest genius of modern poetry. Wordsworth is the least popular of all the English poets; but, at the same time, he excites the highest degree of enthusiasm among his own admirers.

Wordsworth is at the head of the *Lake School*, which includes Southey, Coleridge, Wilson, &c. and is so called because all the poets belonging to it either reside, or have resided, near the lakes of Westmoreland or Cumberland. Though united together by the bonds of relationship and friendship, rather than by the doctrines of their particular poetic theory, yet they may, nevertheless, be regarded as the members of a sect.

I have already alluded to an article in the Edinburgh Review, in which that publication attempted to establish a sort of literary catholicism, by setting up a claim to supremacy and infallibility. The principles of the lake school were the first *heresy* proscribed by the review, which, however, has since shewn more indulgence for the principles, without abating its prejudice against the individuals who profess them. Southey, who is

one of the contributors to the *Quarterly Review*, has occasionally rendered it a vehicle for the defence of his friends. But the lakists have been highly panegyrized in *Blackwood's Magazine*, which was at first hostile to them. Wilson and Coleridge are, however, now concerned in the management of that publication.

In politics, (for under representative governments, even poets are politicians) the lakists are tories. Republicanism was, however, the sin of their youth, and they still retain more liberal ideas than the whigs are willing to give them credit for. The year 89 awakened their enthusiasm, but 93 undeceived them, and in their despair, Southey, Coleridge, and Lovel, were on the point of setting out to found a free colony on the banks of the Susquehannah, in the United States. But since then, Coleridge has become a ministerial writer, and Southey has been made poet laureate.

The poets of the lake school reserve all their admiration for the authors of the Elizabethan age, and find nothing but a void in English literature from the time of Milton and Jeremy Taylor, up to Cowper. They are of opinion that the collection of the old ballads of Bishop Percy has had a tendency to restore the genuine taste for poetry in England. To this almost exclusive admiration for the literature of old times, they combine an absolute passion for metaphysics.

They affect also to view the beauties of nature with a degree of enthusiasm, of which the hearts of all are susceptible, except, as they pretend,

those of the great mass of poets, who, blinded by false systems, discover only conventional charms in the finest natural scenery. Amidst silence and solitude, on the bosom of lakes, or in shady groves, their souls seem to mingle with the universal spirit of nature; they feel an invisible and ineffable influence, which exalts, delights, and purifies them. There is a mysticism in their feelings which bears some analogy to the Pantheism of Pythagoras. For this reason the lake poets are called the Quakers and Methodists of English poetry. Every object of nature to them presents the varied expression of an intellectual power, and they attribute not only a physical, but a moral existence to the most trivial as well as to the grandest object in the creation. They regard the ocean as endowed with feelings and passions; the moon has her caprices; comets, stars, and clouds, are governed by internal impulses. Coleridge, however, since he has become more exclusively philosophic, seems to have forsaken this fanciful theory. He even goes so far as to refute in his autobiography one of the poetic ideas of Wordsworth and Wilson, who suppose that the Deity delights in communing with the pure spirit of childhood.

The lake poets all agree in elevating the domestic virtues and amiable affections above brilliant and dangerous heroism. From them the mother, the daughter, the wife, and the sister, receive an homage as pure as the charm they diffuse over society. They would have the muse of moral

poetry invoked amidst the tumult of the world, like the voice of a sister or a friend calling us back to the innocent pleasures of infancy and home.

Of all the writers of the lake school, Wordsworth comes nearest the idea which the imagination loves to form of an inspired poet; he has carried poetry back to its origin, and to him it is a system of religion; he has, as it were, obtained new revelations concerning the destiny of man. His contemplative soul has continually been occupied with the necessity of ideal perfection. He is the inventor of a sort of Christian platonism, founded on the moral harmony of the universe. He shows us the moral imprint of the finger of God on the humblest object of the creation, and endeavours to lead man to a sense of his dignity, by associating him with the idea of the Almighty. Though he does not always carry us along with him into the elevated sphere of his abstractions, there is nothing offensive in his superiority. He humbles himself with us before the majesty of God and the magnificence or mysteries of his works; and the feelings of the man are not annihilated by the high speculations of the philosopher. But the developement of his sublime theories must be looked for in his grand poem of "*The Excursion.*" This work is distinguished by so calm a spirit of philosophy, and such a tone of solemn simplicity, that to be properly enjoyed, it must be perused in a particular disposition of mind. It requires that concentration of the soul, that pious inspiration which

is indispensable to appreciate the sublimity of a gloomy forest, or the solitude of a vast Gothic cathedral, feebly lighted by the glimmering rays which penetrate its long painted windows.

The poem entitled "*The Excursion,*" though forming in itself a whole, is only a detached portion of an extensive work on *Man, Nature,* and *Society,* on which Wordsworth had been long engaged, and to which his smaller publications are subordinate.

The poem commences by introducing the reader to an old Scotchman, whom the author has known from his earliest youth. The old man, though of humble birth, has received the elements of a solid education and has above all imbibed principles of the strictest piety, thanks to his father-in-law, who was the minister and school-master of his village. Born among the hills of Athol, where he had been accustomed to tend his flocks, he acquired early in life a meditative and poetic character. Religious books also exercised their influence on his youthful imagination. On attaining his eighteenth year, that secret voice which impels the inhabitant of Savoy and of Switzerland to desert his native mountains, whispered in the ear of the young Scotchman, and restless activity urged him to enter on a wandering life, and he follows the trade of a pedlar.

Far from the scenes of his youth, he applies himself to the study of the character of man, his manners, passions, pleasures, and in particular

those feelings which, forming as it were, the essential elements of the heart, are preserved under the simple forms of rural life, and are expressed in the language of ingenuousness. At the approach of old age, he relinquishes his trade; and his acquaintance with the character of social man, combined with that enthusiasm for the beauties of nature which his long and solitary journeys tended to cherish, have made of him a moralist, professing a system founded on his own experience, and employing the eloquent and simple language of nature and truth.

He leads the poet to the dwelling of a hermit, whom he is desirous of reconciling with providence, and who is introduced to the reader as a sceptic reading Voltaire oftener than his Bible. He had formerly been happy in the society of a beloved wife and two children; their death, however, left an irreparable void in his heart, and for a time he became a victim to despair. But he was once more allured to the scene of active life, by the dreams of liberty excited by the French revolution, the principles of which he enthusiastically embraced. Disappointed in his hopes for the cause of freedom, he despaired of man in general. His religious faith was shaken; he even renounced the memory of those whom he had followed weeping to the grave. Yet this is occasionally the source of his remorse.

The pedlar opposes the melancholy ideas of the hermit, and calls to his aid the experience of a village clergyman, who is the fourth actor in this philosophic drama.

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The sublime conversations of these four characters produce a stronger impression, from the circumstance of their being held amidst the most picturesque scenery, to which the attention is frequently directed by descriptive allusions. According to the system to which I have already adverted, the lake, the torrent, and the mountain, have each their language, and nothing in nature is insensible; whatever is visible, whatever is endowed with motion or voice, presents not merely obscure symbols, or fantastic emblems, but real revelations. The humming of a shell announces the mysterious alliance of its inhabitant with the roaring ocean. An echo sometimes furnishes an image of the harmony of the two worlds, and sometimes a corresponding idea is produced by the sight of a shadow, and the body whose form it repeats.

The fourth book is particularly remarkable for exalted morality, profound views, and poetic applications. It developes the other principle of the *lakists*, namely, that the pride of human judgment should be humbled, in order to restore to the imagination and the affections that sway of which modern philosophy would deprive them.

The history of the spiritualism which was concealed under the idolatry of the Greeks, introduces a most poetic description of the remains of paganism; but an objection from the hermit leads the philosopher to a defence of his Christian orthodoxy. The village pastor makes his appearance in the fifth book, and, at the gate of the church-yard,

justifies providence against despair. The remarks of the poet's venerable friend frequently remind the reader of the famous address of the old man of the Isle of France to Paul, to console him for the loss of Virginia. It is worthy of remark, that when Bernardin de St. Pierre consulted his friends on the subject of his master-piece, posterity was near being deprived of it through the unfavourable impression it produced on those who first perused it. Wordsworth has not yet lived, like St. Pierre, to be revenged of his scornful judges.

The pastor is requested to bring forward, in support of the moral system he has defended, some episodes from country life. He chooses for his text the modest virtues, and the faults of those whom he has himself laid beneath the turf.

It would injure the effect of these portraits to draw them singly from their frames; but I cannot pass over, unnoticed, the ingenious anecdote of the two men of opposite opinions, who are thrown together by accident, and to whom contradiction becomes an absolute necessity. This episode bears some resemblance to those of Cowper, and even to Crabbe's tales. One of the two friends is a whig, who having spent a handsome fortune in electioneering struggles, retires, under an assumed name, to a village in the Highlands, where a Scottish laird, who had taken part with the Stuarts, seeks an asylum after the battle of Culloden. These two men, though they make not the least concession on either side, yet by the very habit of seeing, meeting, and contradicting each other, become such

inseparable friends, as to wish at their death to be laid in the same grave together.

Among the pathetic episodes, *Ellen,* the *cottage in ruins,* and the *confessions of the hermit,* are the most affecting.

The development of the author's principles, together with these episodes, give to the work rather a didactic than a dramatic character. It would, therefore, be surprising if some commonplaces did not slip in, feebly disguised under the pomp of verse. The reader may occasionally regret the absence of the impassioned energy of Byron, the spirit and the action of Sir Walter Scott; but it would be unjust to deny that this great poem forms, on the whole, an eloquent development of a system of philosophy worthy of a Christian Plato.

But, to return to the earlier productions of Wordsworth. If sublimity of expression and elevated views be the distinguishing features of *The Excursion,* his lyric ballads are sometimes written with a degree of simplicity almost bordering on affectation. Here Mr. Wordsworth's critics have found ample scope to accuse him of mawkish sentimentality. His admirers, however, maintain that, in spite of some inconsiderable defects, this series of little poems was the development of his principal object; the analysis of the real feelings of man,—of man considered independently of the conventional forms of society, from the first dawn of childhood to the hopes and recollections of old age. Inequality of style, that is to say, a mixture

of the solemn and the vulgar, long commentaries on trifling events, prolixity and idle repetitions, overcharged grandeur of imagery, and misplaced emphasis of expression, are the defects of Wordsworth's detached poems; but their redeeming qualities are numerous. The grace and beauty of a poetic diction, resembling that of primitive nations, the depth and originality of the thoughts and sentiments, the truth of the images borrowed from nature, lively sensibility, and an imagination which often elevates the most common-place subject:—these are the qualities which make the reader forget all the defects which criticism has so eagerly discovered in the lake poet.

The great charm of Wordsworth's poems is that they in some degree regenerate the heart, restoring to it all the freshness of its primitive sensations, and the independence of that age, when the acquisition of each new idea was a conquest which made it beat with joy, and when we were yet free from the common-place restraints imposed by the world, in morality as well as poetry.

Wordsworth himself indicates, by the classification of his different poems, that his works are a poetic analysis of the feelings which external objects and an interchange of thoughts or affections awaken in the heart and the understanding of childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. He brings us back to our most trivial sensations; but he gives at the same time a meaning and a voice to those sublime, though sometimes obscure, aspi-

rations which the wonders of the creation awaken in the least poetic mind.

The poet himself informs us that in the composition of his ballads, his object was to select events and situations from common life, and to describe them with simplicity, at the same time heightening their colouring whenever the subject presented itself to his mind under an unusual form. But what he particularly proposed was to give to those events and situations a totally novel interest, by developing in them the primordial laws of our nature, and by that inexhaustible resource of the imagination which rhetoricians call the association of ideas.

The simplicity of rustic life was preferred for several reasons—first, because in common life the natural passions of the heart are less frequently perverted, are less constrained, and are expressed with greater freedom and unreservedness;—secondly, the elementary sensations, on account of their great simplicity, may be more clearly perceived;—thirdly, the manners of common life spring from those elementary sensations, and are less easily modified or changed;—and finally, the passions are there associated with the permanent forms of nature. The language of rural life, purified of its grossness, was therefore adopted by the poet, because the men by whom it is spoken are continually communicating with the objects whence the most poetic imagery is derived, and because their rank in society, as well as the narrow and unvaried circle of their intercourse with mankind,

removes them from the influence of social vanities, and they express their sentiments and ideas in a natural and unstudied manner. "Accordingly," says Mr. Wordsworth, "such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation."

I have not space to enter into a detailed explanation of the philosophy of the new language which Wordsworth has undertaken to subject to the laws of rhythm. I shall not commence a philological discussion, which would not perhaps be altogether favourable to the lake poets, because, like all men of genius, who make themselves the slaves of a system, Wordsworth frequently excites the highest admiration when he departs from that system. I believe I have already made the same observation with regard to Mr. Crabbe. I am content to admire Wordsworth's talent for observing and delineating the various workings of the mind, when it is agitated, as he himself observes, by the noble and unsophisticated affections of our nature. In this manner he has analysed maternal affection in several of its most difficult shades; he has painted the last conflict of instinct with death, and has

exhibited all the pure moral of fraternal love. But what above all distinguishes Wordsworth's poetry is, that the sentiment developed gives importance to the action and the situation,—while, as he himself very justly remarks, in the writings of other poets, the actions and situations confer importance on the sentiment. To afford you an idea of Wordsworth's talent in this style of composition, I transcribe the following stanzas, prefixing a few lines explanatory of their subject.

During the emigration of the tribes of North American Indians, if one of the party should happen to fall ill, or be unable to endure the fatigue of the journey, he is left behind with some deer skins, for covering, some provisions, water, and a supply of wood for kindling a fire. He is informed of the track which the tribe intend to follow, and if he do not overtake them, or fall in with some other wandering tribe, he must perish in the desert. Women are frequently abandoned in this manner; and the following lines are supposed to be the lamentations of one of these unhappy beings. On awaking from a sleep, which has been disturbed by dreams of death, she shudders at the melancholy solitude of her last hour. She at first invokes a speedy release to her misery; but the recollection of her child forces her to acknowledge that life would still be dear to her. I begin with the third stanza.

"Alas! ye might have dragg'd me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon I yielded to despair;

Why did you listen to my prayer?
When ye were gone my limbs were stronger;
And oh how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
My friends when ye were gone away.

"My child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran;
A most strange working did I see;
— As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me.
And then he stretched his arms, how wild!
Oh mercy! like a helpless child.

"My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me;
I feel I must have died with thee.
Oh wind, that o'er my head art flying
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send!
Too soon, my friends, ye went away,
For I had many things to say.

"I'll follow you across the snow;
Ye travel heavily and slow;
In spite of all my weary pain,
I'll look upon your tents again.
—My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood;
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I,
Then wherefore should I fear to die?"

Wordsworth has also written another touching

complaint of a poor emigrant Frenchwoman, who being separated from her child, endeavours to cheat her maternal sorrow by caressing the offspring of another.

The *Female Vagrant* is the pathetic history of a family reduced to misery. How charming are the regrets expressed by the poor woman at the recollection of the scenes of her childhood! And in the little poem entitled *Resolution and Independence*, how ably has the author pourtrayed the natural, but often inexplicable transition, from enthusiasm to gloomy reverie!

Many of Wordsworth's sonnets present grand images inspired by the events of the age, and are by turns prophetic visions of the future, and sublime commentaries on the past. I select the following from among the *Sonnets on Liberty*, and the *Sonnets to Buonaparte*.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

"Once did she hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest child of liberty.
She was a maiden city, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And when she took unto herself a mate
She must espouse the everlasting sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay,
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reach'd its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
Of that which once was great is pass'd away."

But if you would *love* Wordsworth, without ceasing to *admire* him, I advise you to read the pastoral of *Michael*, the history of poor *Ruth*, (which reminds one of Sterne's Maria), the ballad of *Hart leap well*, the reveries on the banks of the Wye, the Brothers, and the commencement of the history of a man who gains his livelihood by catching leeches. I dare say you will smile at these titles, which are certainly not of a very epic character; and I will not therefore recommend you to peruse the *Waggoner*, or *Peter Bell*, which latter is the hero of the poem only on the title-page, for the principal character is an ass, the animal which Homer did not despise, and which Buffon and Delille have celebrated in verse. Wordsworth, however, has been the first to create a *philosophic ass*. I will not multiply extracts, which would be only mutilating the productions of the poet, who himself declares, that all his works are connected one with another. Critics who are so fond of quoting, remind me of Harlequin in one of our pantomimes, who when he wanted to sell his house, took out a few of the bricks to shew as a specimen of its quality.

Wordsworth himself acknowledges that his *associations* have sometimes been particular rather than general; that he has consequently given to certain objects a false degree of importance, and treated subjects beneath the dignity of poetry. For my own part, I must confess that I have often found a whole world of new sensations in

those subjects which are usually deemed beneath the dignity of poetry, as for example in the *Frasier* of Bernardin de St. Pierre. The least phenomena of the creation present mysterious harmonies which are fertile in great results. The sublime revelation of God, or if you will, of nature personified, is poetically manifested in a thousand subjects which have been hitherto neglected by poets, and which Wordsworth has analysed in a grand and original way. When the Lord appears to Elijah, in the First Book of Kings, it is not the strong wind, nor the earthquake, nor the fire, but a gentle breath of air that fills the prophet with the consciousness of his presence.

"And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind came an earthquake.

"And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

"And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle."

Adieu!

LETTER LXV.

TO M. ALPH. DE LA MARTINE.

Mr. Wordsworth may, in some respects, be compared to Jaques, in *As You Like It;* but in regard to reveries, his friend, J. Taylor Coleridge, leaves far behind him Shakspeare's contemplative philosopher, who, however, has the advantage of never having been a ministerial journalist.*

> "From morn to night I am myself a dreamer,
> And slight things bring on me the idle mood,"

says one of the characters in his metaphysical tragedy. It is but just to add, that Coleridge would, perhaps, be the greatest of modern poets, if he were not the most indolent. He is an extraordinary dreamer, and all his poetry seems to be composed in his sleep. *Kubla-Khan*, one of his day dreams, is preceded by a little preface, in which he states, that while engaged in transcribing his poem, he was called away on business, and that,

* Perhaps Coleridge's best verses are those which are dated from the period of his political independence:

> "Not yet enslaved, not wholly free,
> O Albion!" &c. &c.
>
> *Ode on the Year* 1796.

on his return home, he was unable to catch the thread of his narrative; consequently, the story is but half told. He offers no better apology for all the unfinished fragments contained in his poetic collections, entitled, *Sybiline Leaves.*

Every one of Coleridge's productions has been left incomplete, through mere indolence. It unfortunately happened, that while he attended the German universities, his enthusiastic imagination imbibed the contagion of that philosophic and religious mysticism, which, like a cloud, envelopes the greater portion of his writings, and often renders the brilliant flashes of his genius less vivid than they would otherwise be. This obscurity is particularly remarkable in his prose. Coleridge is said to be the only man who has thoroughly understood Kant and Fichté; but, it is to be regretted, that that advantage should sometimes have the effect of rendering his own writings unintelligible. Madame de Staël, while she has explained Kant, according to her own ideas, has, at least, written in a way to be understood; but Coleridge seems only to have added the impenetrable veil of his own theories to those of the German philosopher.

Coleridge's reputation long rested on the hopes excited by his youthful genius, or on the exaggerated praises bestowed by his admirers on certain poems, which, it was affirmed, would astonish the world, but which, eventually, proved to be mere abortions. He is now praised, not for what he will do, but for what he might do. He has, how-

ever, now in his portfolio, a work on which high expectations are founded. This is, his *Lectures on Shakspeare*. Those who have read them, speak with contempt of Schlegel's lectures. Coleridge, it appears, possesses, in an eminent degree, the charm of extempore composition, and even his ordinary conversation displays beautiful effusions of eloquence. He should always have a short-hand writer at his side, to note down his brilliant inspirations. Henry B—— has had the good fortune to hear Coleridge preach (for he has travelled as a missionary), deliver lectures on poetry and political prophecies, and, in fine, he has been happy enough to hear him in familiar conversation. Coleridge had, at one time, a sort of disciple, who, unfortunately, was not a Boswell. Instead of the active admiration of Johnson's biographer, John Chester could only listen to his master and give him verbal assurances of ecstacy. I subjoin a quotation from another of his admirers. Pray do not suppose that I concur in the comparison between Madame Catalani's singing and Coleridge's eloquence. I never saw Catalani but once, and on that occasion, though a prince sent his ambassador to invite her to sing, I regret to say, that she repeated in simple prose, the following line from one of our comic operas.

"Non, non, je ne veux pas chanter." *

* This happened at a splendid ball given by the French ambassador, at which all the principal English nobility were assembled. The ball was given in honour of the Prince and Princess of Denmark.

I should not, probably, be able to console myself for this disappointment, but that I have since heard the air which Catalani was requested to sing, executed by the divine voice of Mainville Fodor. But now for my quotation:

"*I have heard Coleridge speak*, and when a person has enjoyed that happiness, it seems here to be an understood thing, that he may be as enthusiastic as he pleases in his admiration of Coleridge's genius, without being accused of extravagance. In fact, the first evening passed in company with Coleridge, if he be in a humour for talking, (and when is he not so?) forms an epoch in a man's life. For my part, I had no idea of what is called the natural gift of eloquence, before I was present at that extraordinary spectacle, for it is literally a spectacle. You cannot speak yourself, or hear any one else speak. Where Coleridge is, all conversation is suspended. You listen to *him*, and to no other, and you can wish for nothing more.

"No comparison can be drawn between his written and his spoken prose. If what he says in the course of one evening could be noted down, it would surpass all the prose he has ever published, whether considered with respect to depth of ideas, happy images and allusions, extent and variety of knowledge, or richness, purity, and elegance of diction. His conversation is as extraordinary as the game of chess played by the automaton which was exhibited some years ago in Paris. You sit mute and motionless with admira-

tion and surprise. It is quite impossible to embarrass him or put him out. One might almost say, that he is, like the automaton, wound up by a spring, and must go on to the end. But when will be the end? That no one can guess; and thus the spectators often rise and go out in the midst of the game, not being able to foresee when it may come to a close. Coleridge, too, like the automaton, always wins. I have heard, that he never allowed any one to gain the slightest advantage over him. In fact, were it not evident that he feels all he says, at the very moment when he is speaking, he might be looked upon as a piece of machinery, which speaks and speaks on, because it cannot do otherwise.

"But, perhaps, Coleridge's eloquence may more justly be compared to Catalani's singing. It is as rich, as brilliant, as dazzling, as inexhaustible. Catalani cannot be followed by the performers in the orchestra, whose business it is to accompany her and to fill up the pauses of her song; and Coleridge's conversation may, perhaps, be full of mistakes and solecisms. But what matters that? Who could detect false intonation in the singing of Catalani, or solecisms in the eloquence of Coleridge? Perhaps the magical charm of both the singer and the speaker, consists in the air of sincere feeling which accompanies every syllable they utter; and this, in a great measure, depends on the heavenly, though somewhat vague smile that plays upon their lips. However, it must be confessed, that in listening to them, one is in-

clined to be very soon *satisfied* if not *satiated.* They surprise and delight for a time; but they are too much above our understanding; they, perhaps, touch our self-love too nearly to produce any lasting sympathy. Their exquisite simplicity, and the air of perfect good-nature and sincerity impressed on their countenances, are the charms which have rendered them so long supportable."—(*Soligny's Letters.*) *

A remarkable characteristic of Coleridge's poetry, is, that its simplicity and ease are admirably blended with great richness of expression, and with continual harmony and elegance. Even the faulty metre of his verses seems to be calculated. It is music in which the rules of composition are violated, but which is, nevertheless, perfectly appropriate to the sentiment it is intended to express. There is something very fantastic in Coleridge's rhythm, when his subjects are borrowed from the phantasmagoria of his own dreams. His philosophic fragments have not the solemn and somewhat monotonous tone of Wordsworth; they present the energy of Milton, and the beauty of Shakspeare. The reveries of love are, in Coleridge's verses, described with captivating melancholy and simplicity. Few writers have better understood the delicacy of that pas-

* The comparison of the automaton and Catalani, will, I dare say, be thought in very bad taste; but I wished to afford an idea of an affected style of criticism which has been brought into fashion in England, by Hazlitt. Soligny's letters are not all written in the above style.

sion. Coleridge has represented its most poetic ideality, and even to the emotions of the senses he has given the language of the imagination. It is he who makes a lover say, when speaking of his mistress—

> "Her voice, that even in her mirthful mood,
> Has made me wish to steal away and weep."

The little poem of *Genevieve* abounds in touches no less charming. It is a sweet picture of the *metaphysics* of first love, and possesses a great deal of that grace which has been so highly admired in Dante's *Qual giorno no leggiamo mai.*

Genevieve was one of Wordsworth's collection of lyrical ballads; but Coleridge subsequently separated his works from those of his friend. According to the plan mutually agreed upon between them, Coleridge was to make choice of imaginary heroes and subjects, without, however, renouncing the advantage of imparting to them a degree of interest and an air of probability, sufficient to obtain from his readers what he terms poetic faith—that is to say, *the voluntary suspension of the critical spirit of incredulous reason.* The *Ancient Mariner* is Coleridge's best ballad. It is a whimsical conception; but I cannot, like the author's friends, pronounce it to be at once *astonishing and original.* It is, they affirm, a poem which must be felt, admired, and meditated upon, but which cannot possibly be described, analyzed, or criticised. I doubt whether it would, in France

be acknowledged to be the most singular of the creations of genius. But to the *lakists* it *is* not a thing of this material world. They regard the melodious verses of this poem as the melancholy and mysterious murmur of a dream; to them the images have the beauty, grandeur, and incoherence of a vision, in which imposing shadows are mingled with graceful and distinct forms. Every fault is pardoned, the superfluous ornaments, the redundance of the language, and the vagueness and confusion of the narrative. I will endeavour to give you an idea of the story.

The poem opens with the celebration of a wedding. Joyous music is heard, and lights burning at a distance guide the guests to the festival. One of them is stopped by an old man, who seizes him by the hand, and insists on speaking to him; he gets away from him; but the stranger, who is the old mariner, has an *irresistible charm* in his look, and possesses a singular power of fascination. The sailor, without any preamble, relates that he once embarked on board a vessel to sail for the South Sea. The ship steered with a favourable wind as far as the Line, when suddenly a violent storm arose, and it was driven into the icy regions. A sea bird, the Albatross, is received with joy and hospitality by the ship's crew. The appearance of this bird is regarded as a good augury. It accompanies the vessel, but is killed by the old sailor. The fair weather ceases, and the crew overwhelm the sailor with reproaches; but, on the return of a favourable gale, they justify him, and

thus become accomplices in his crime. A calm suddenly arises, and the vessel is impeded in her course. The Albatross is now about to be avenged. The miseries which assail the ship's crew, the feverish thirst which torments them amidst the vast plain of water by which they are surrounded, all are the result of the old sailor's cruelty. An exclamation of joy escapes from them at the sight of an approaching vessel; but they are filled with horror, on discovering that the ship is sailing without the aid of either wind or current. It proves only to be the *skeleton of a vessel.** The crew consists of two phantoms, viz.: *Death*, and another which the narrator terms *Life in Death*. These two phantoms dispute for the possession of the old sailor, and cast dice to determine which shall have the prize. Life in Death is the winner. The old sailor sees his comrades perish in the waves, venting imprecations on him in their dying moments. Amidst the pangs of remorse, and the gloomy reflections of which he is now the victim, a sentiment of charity still lingers in his heart, and is the means of saving him. He ejaculates a prayer, and from that moment he is cheered by returning hope. The Holy Virgin sends to his aid a refreshing slumber and a shower of rain, and he hears strange voices and an extraordinary commotion in the elements.

The vessel moves, the dead bodies, which have been floating on the waves, utter groans, and rise

* Sir Walter Scott has introduced this phenomenon of nautical superstition into his poem of *Rokeby*.

up, but without speaking or moving their eyes. The pilot stations himself at the helm, and the vessel sails on, though not a breath of air is stirring. The sailors are all at their posts, and their limbs are in motion like insensible machines.

However, the Spirit of the Pole claims his revenge, and obtains it. The misery of the sailor again commences; but after expiating his offence by a long series of torments and terrors, he at length reaches his native shore. The angels, who have temporarily re-animated the bodies of the ship's crew, re-assume their forms of light. A hermit receives the sailor on the shore. He unfolds to him his dreadful history, and he is afterwards doomed to wander through the world, and to tell his tale, in order to warn men, by his example, to respect God's creatures.

In the above description I have suppressed several details of great beauty, or, if you will, of singular extravagance. Coleridge has lavished a vast store of poetry and imagination on this little production; and he has displayed singular ingenuity in the management of the style. The language of the mariner is sometimes rapid and impetuous, like the tempest by which the vessel is hurled along; and to this succeeds a measured solemnity, indicative of the calm.* The interruptions of the auditor, the sprightly music of the nuptial festival, mingling with the accents of re-

* "It is a great art in certain fictions to imitate by words the solemn stillness which imagination pictures in the empire of darkness and death."—*Madame de Stael.*

morse and fear, all are calculated to excite superstitious terror and melancholy. This poem, it is said, produces a most impressive effect when recited by Coleridge himself.

Christabel, which is a composition of the same class, has been too highly extolled by Lord Byron. It is an incomplete effusion.

There is certainly some analogy between the talent of Coleridge and that of the German poet, Burger, the author of *Leonora*. I should almost be inclined to say that the English poet is the most *German* of the two; for even in his pictures of ordinary life, where he has to trace the most natural emotions, his imagination loves to soar beyond the visible world, to gather rich and mysterious colours from the realms of illusion. Coleridge has even applied his phantasmagoria to politics. His pretended eclogue, entitled, *Fire, Famine, and Carnage*, was an energetic malediction upon Pitt, in the time of his power. In La Vendée, on a plain ravaged by war, the three personified scourges meet, and express their gratitude to the minister, who supplied them with so many victims. The scene of the three furies in *Manfred* would form an admirable pendant to this.

This dramatic sketch naturally leads me to speak of Coleridge's tragedies. I can say little about the *Fall of Robespierre*, as I have not yet perused it with sufficient attention. Coleridge has translated, or rather imitated Schiller's *Wallenstein;* for the German piece receives new beauty from its Eng-

lish dress, while a mere translator usually impoverishes his author. The tragedy of *Zapoloya* is imitated from Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale*, with this difference, that as Coleridge, could not, like his model, venture to pass over an interval of twenty years between one act and another, he has written a second piece, detached from the first, under the title of *Prelude*. This concession to Aristotle is singular enough on the part of so fanciful a writer; but you must know that he has strongly expressed his disapproval of dramatic licences, in some critical remarks on Maturin's *Bertram*, and the plays of Kotzebue. Coleridge's tragedies are indeed sometimes mystical, but never so extravagant as his poem of the *Ancient Mariner* would lead one to suppose. *Remorse* is the only one of his dramatic productions which has attained any degree of success on the stage. The character of Ordonio is profoundly conceived; but unfortunately everything seems to be sacrificed to that one character. Every succeeding scene developes a new trait in this *moral monster*, who is a compound of pride, selfishness, honour, and generosity. Lord Byron has pourtrayed so many heroes of this stamp, that they have now almost forfeited all claim to originality. The great merit of the tragedy of *Remorse* is the beautiful poetry of its details. The piece is, however, more full of incident and interest than metaphysical tragedies usually are.

The scene is laid in Granada, during the reign

of Philip II., towards the close of the civil wars with the Moors, who are subjected to the utmost rigour of persecution. The inquisitor Monveidro, however, plays only a secondary part. The Marquess de Valdez has two sons, Alvar and Ordonio. The former, who is betrothed to an orphan, named Theresa, his father's ward, sets out on his travels, after receiving the plighted faith of his mistress, together with her portrait, which he is to wear concealed in his bosom as the secret, but solemn, pledge of their future union. Ordonio, who is himself enamoured of Theresa, is an invisible witness of the parting interview of the lovers, and on being informed of his brother's approaching return, he dispatches three Moors to assassinate him. One of these Moors is Isidore, a man devoted to the interests of Ordonio, by whom his life has been saved. Isidore is, however, only prevailed on to become the murderer of Alvar, by being persuaded that he is the enemy of his benefactor. Alvar defends himself courageously, and, finally, comes to an explanation with Isidore; who, discovering him to be the brother of Ordonio, is satisfied with his promise of exiling himself from Grenada, for the space of a year; and he receives from him the portrait of Theresa. Alvar the more readily surrenders the portrait of his mistress, because he is at that moment induced to believe that Theresa has betrayed him, and is favouring the suit of Ordonio. The latter supposing his brother to be no more, offers his hand to Theresa, who long refuses to believe the death of Alvar. Or-

donio renders a fresh service to Isidore; in return for which, he requires him to use means to convince Theresa that Alvar is numbered with the dead. To effect this object, he wishes him to assume the character of a magician: this Isidore refuses to do; but he refers Ordonio to a mysterious stranger, who has just arrived in Grenada, and who, he assures him, will readily obey his commands. This is no other than Alvar himself; and Ordonio, in communicating his treacherous instructions, unconsciously reveals to him the innocence of Theresa. He gives him the precious portrait, which the pretended magician is to produce, after a mysterious invocation addressed to the shade of the deceased; but Alvar exhibits, to the astonished eyes of his brother and his bride, a picture representing his supposed murder. This scene is interrupted by Ordonio's exclamations of rage, and by the entrance of the familiars of the inquisition, who seize Alvar for practising sorcery, and throw him into a dungeon. Ordonio, thinking himself betrayed by Isidore, vows his destruction and that of the stranger. He, however, executes only half his revenge; and Alvar, who has already made himself known to Theresa, confounds the traitor, by consigning him to the torments of remorse, which, as the author says—

> " Is as the heart, in which it grows:
> If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews
> Of true repentance; but if proud and gloomy,
> It is a poison-tree, that, pierced to the inmost,
> Weeps only tears of poison!'

In the midst of his misery, Ordonio is surprised by a party of Moors, headed by Alhadra. This Alhadra, who is a forcibly drawn character, is the wife of Isidore, whose death she avenges, by plunging a dagger into the heart of Ordonio.

It would be unjust to exhibit the faults and improbabilities of this tragedy, without enabling you to form an idea of its merits. The following passage, from the scene in which Alhadra describes her anguish on discovering the murder of Isidore, appears to me to possess singular poetic beauty.

——————————————"I stood listening,
Impatient for the footsteps of my husband!
Naomi. Thou call'd'st him?
Alhad. I crept into the cavern—
'Twas dark and very silent. (*Turns wildly.*)
What said'st thou?
No! no! I did not dare to call Isidore,
Lest I should hear no answer! a brief while,
Belike, I lost all thought and memory
Of that for which I came! After that pause,
O Heaven! I heard a groan, and followed it—
And yet another groan, which guided me
Into a strange recess—and there was *light*,
A hideous light! his torch lay on the ground;
Its flame burnt dimly o'er a chasm's brink!
I spake, and whilst I spake, a feeble groan
Came from that chasm! It was his last! his death groan!
Naomi. Comfort her Alla!
Alhad. I stood in unimaginable trance,
And agony that cannot be remember'd,
Listening with horrid hope to hear a groan!
But I had heard his last—my husband's death-groan!"

I have yet to give you an account of Coleridge's auto-biography; but this I shall make the subject of a separate letter, when I visit the lakes.

LETTER LXVI.

TO SENORA BLAIN Y CERVANTES.

THE mere list of the various productions of the Poet Laureate, bears evidence of his industry and facility. Mr. Southey is, beyond all contradiction, the most universal of modern poets; and if all the world does not admit that he is the most inventive, it is, perhaps, because he is suspected of having recourse to the erudite stores of his memory, more frequently than to his poetic imagination. The profuseness of his notes may be regarded as a proof of mal-adroit candour, or bibliomanic vanity.* As a chronicler, a historian, a biographer, an editor, a romance writer, an antiquary, a poet, in short, in every possible department of literature, Southey is a rival to Sir Walter Scott; and if *Old Mortality* and *Ivanhoe* had not sufficiently proved, that in the representation of modern manners, prose language may be very successfully adapted to the epopee, the author of *Roderick* would be the first epic poet in Great Britain.

* Southey possesses one of the most valuable libraries in England.

The *Chronicle of the Cid* entitled him at least to the glory of having discovered all the Homeric spirit which belongs to the simplicity of the chivalric poets. Even amidst the pomp of poetic romance, Mr. Southey, as a *laker*, has not sacrificed natural feeling to the artificial sentiments of conventional heroism; but, unfortunately, he rested his claims to originality, on the singularity and novelty of his subjects, rather than on the resources of his genius. If his cosmopolitan muse had but concentrated her powers on national subjects, Southey's originality would have been more decided. By turns, French, Arabic, Indian, and Spanish, Southey's muse assumes the garb of every nation she adopts; but her borrowed robes do not always sit easily upon her. She sometimes betrays an air of constraint, though she endeavours to conceal it by forced energy. She reminds one of an actor, whose whole attention is engrossed in arranging his drapery and studying his attitudes. The muse of the Scottish bard, on the contrary, is always animated and perfectly at ease beneath the folds of her plaid; she never sacrifices her natural inspirations, but shews herself in all her native grace and dignity. Then again with regard to style. Scott's is never studied; his common places pass off like the current coin of conversation, and contribute to the illusion. Southey, who always seems to be translating a foreign language, requires to be continually supported by ideas; and the filling up phrases, which are requisite in all sorts of composition, often appear in

Southey's writings merely trivial verbosity; while his use of antiquated words and turns of expression sometimes produce a kind of patchwork effect. These faults are never observable in Scott's writings. I feel the more confident in pronouncing these opinions on Southey's talent, owing to the peculiar charm of his detached poems and tales, which present the expression of his own individual ideas, whether as a lake poet, as for instance in his *Address to the Penates* and his *Landscape of Poussin*, or whether he assumes a philosophic tone, half serious, half ironical, as in his tale of *San Gualberto*. His ballads on popular and local superstitions are also very impressive, as for example, *Lord William, or the History of the Old Woman of Berkeley*. As a prose writer, Southey is generally natural, easy, and free from all affectation. I willingly bestow my tribute of praise on his excellent articles in the *Quarterly Review*; and this is the more generous in me as a Frenchman, since I strongly suspect Southey of being at least an accomplice in certain illiberal attacks on France, which have appeared in that publication. But these articles have, on the other hand, been ably refuted by the Edinburgh reviewers, and by the satires of Lord Byron. I cannot help repeating the fact, that Southey became an indifferent poet only after he turned a ministerial writer. Let Southey, the poet laureate and pensioned writer, be compared with Southey the author of *Joan of Arc*. The French have certainly reason to be grateful to him for that production. Shak-

speare is unjust towards the heroine of *Domremi*; but Southey's muse has made her ample amends.

The poem of *Joan of Arc* was written by Southey at the age of nineteen, and was published in 1795, under the influence of the republican principles, which the author at that period professed. In subsequent editions of the poem, Southey has, however, been candid enough not to retrench his liberal allusions, and those maledictions against English tyranny, which could not be very favourably received in England at a moment when the stern policy of Pitt, and the chivalrous policy of Burke, had excited among the English a strong prejudice against the French revolution. A hue and cry was raised against Southey's abuse of talent.* Who could then have foreseen that the young *gallomanic* poet would one day become the furious enemy of French glory? The liberal avenger of Joan of Arc does not however appear, from his poem, to have been precisely a girondist or a patriot of 1789. From his religious opinions, and his union of the spirit of the feudal chronicles with the solemn style of the *Paradise Lost*, he may be more properly termed an independent of Cromwell's time, and a disciple of Milton. The philosophic principles of the day are plainly recognisable in that admirable vision, in which

* Miss Seward, in one of her admirable letters, alluding to Southey's *Joan of Arc*, styles it "a twin miracle in juvenile poetic excellence to the inspirations of Chatterton. But (she adds) this later prodigy is in design a parricide, aiming envenomed shafts at the bosom of his country, her constitution, and the character of her inhabitants."

Despair appeals to Joan of Arc in favour of Suicide, and in which the Maid of Orleans borrows from Rousseau's *Julie* some portion of her eloquent refutation. But the general character of the work is religious. It is curious to find the future biographer of Wesley, the Methodist, making Joan of Arc almost a mystical enthusiast. But was that really her character? Who can read her wonderful history without feeling the conviction of her heavenly inspiration? Where is the Frenchman who will venture to deny, that there was something divine in the patriotism of Joan of Arc? Southey has made his heroine cherish the recollection of a terrestrial passion, which gives her a charming air of melancholy, without in any way diminishing her purity. It is of course unnecessary to describe the incidents of a poem, the subject of which must be familiar to every one. The poet has not had recourse to any fantastic agency. Joan simply relates to Dunois the signs she has received of her mission, and her mysterious dreams under the tree of the fairies. The ninth canto was originally a long vision, which transported the reader to an imaginary world. The author afterwards retrenched it, and gave it in an appendix, because he was of opinion that it contributed to retard the events of the poem; but perhaps, after all, he was not quite right in making this alteration. Coleridge had some share in the invention of this allegorical part of the poem. It presents several sublime images, as, for instance, the personification of desp r, and the hall of glory

in which Henry V. expiates his conquests. The author has here indulged in a satirical attack on the church, and the prerogatives of its dignitaries, of which he is now so ardent a defender. He has placed in hell the English prelates in their surplices, together with our cardinals in full costume, and there they are all condemned to a scrupulous fulfilment of those duties, which they converted into sinecures in those earthly paradises. I must also notice the ingenious allegory of the frail thread of life, which, with fearful swiftness winds upon a fatal wheel, which two genii lave with water contained in two urns. From the ebony urn flows the bitter water from the spring of evil, and the genius who pours it out has a gloomy smile on his countenance. A more benign spirit has charge of the other urn, the contents of which are of a less baneful nature, and which are augmented by the tears the spirit sheds in compassion for the lot of man.

The style of *Joan of Arc* is an imitation of the occasionally stiff rhythm of Milton. In his second poem, Southey has steered clear of all imitation, either in the measure of the verse or the subject. The scene is laid in the east, for this writer has made the tour of the world in his poems, and has availed himself of the traditions, the history, and the faith of every nation. The prodigious learning displayed in each of his works, proves the absurdity of those poets who are constantly endeavouring to retrace the footsteps of Homer and Virgil, instead of availing themselves of the various new paths

which civilization has opened to them. What misfortune would it have been to literature, h Milton imposed on himself the task of writing a other *Æneid!* Tasso, who with infinite taste su jected the muse of Christian Europe to the for of ancient poetry, never soared to a loftier heig than in painting the manners of his own age; a we cannot but confess, that Voltaire was more tr to nature, when he made himself the rival of A osto, than when, full of the recollection of college studies, he traced his Henry IV. on t model of the pious Æneas. Lord Byron accus himself, as of a crime, of being one of those w have raised Chinese pagodas beside Greek te ples, the only genuine models of art. The clas architecture of St. Paul's did not render me ind ferent to the beauties of Westminster Abbey, even the Pavilion at Brighton. In like manne derived pleasure from reading *Thalaba* after *Jo of Arc*, and *The Curse of Kehama* after *Madoc Roderick*. Since Southey was fated to write fi epic poems, I am glad he did not produce fi *Joans of Arc*, or five *Thalabas*.

> "Si *Peau d'âne* m'etait conté,
> J'y prendrais un plaisir extrême,"

says La Fontaine, who read *Peau d'âne* and *Bar* with equal pleasure. But if judged by the rules our French theory of poetry, *Thalaba* is no more epic poem than *Peau d'âne*. The versification p sents a whimsical mixture of every kind of met

from lines of fourteen feet, to lines consisting of a single monosyllable, and the irregular stanzas do not succeed each other regularly, as in the ode or the dithyrambic. This variegated versification, if I may so express myself, is favourable to every variety of style, and after a lyric flight the poet descends to the modest level of a narrator. After a page full of unmeaning and artificially condensed words, there comes a brilliant description, an energetic apostrophe, or, by an unexpected transition, the chaste and solemn graces of genuine epic composition.

The poem opens with the following sweet picture :—

" How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, no little cloud
Breaks the whole serene of heaven;
In full-orbed glory the majestic moon
Rolls through the dark blue depths.
Beneath her steady ray
The desert circle spreads,
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.
How beautiful is night!"

The silence is interrupted by the wandering footsteps of a woman, who is flying with her son over the desarts of Arabia, and the boy is soon left crying in the wilderness, over the lifeless remains of his mother. This child is Thalaba, who by a miracle has escaped from a murderer who has sacrificed his father, an old Arab, named Hodeisa, and all his race. The murderer is the

agent of a party of magicians, who dwell in the caverns of Domdaniel, at the bottom of the ocean, and who have been informed that their destroyer is to spring up from the race of Hodeisa. The conflicts between Thalaba and these magicians form the subject of the poem, and at length the young hero penetrates into the retreat of his enemies, and, like another Samson, perishes along with them beneath the ruins of their cavern.

Such a story, of course, requires to be supported by all sorts of poetic accessories, and it is but rendering justice to Mr. Southey to say, that he has ably availed himself of the rich colouring of oriental imagery, scenery, and costume. He has, at the same time, produced the most varied contrasts, in the incidents and episodes. Along with the luxuriant imagery, and the continued succession of extraordinary adventures which the poem presents, the author has interwoven pathetic descriptions of the simple scenes of his hero's childhood. Thalaba is picked up by a good old Arab, who conveys him to his patriarchal tent, where he brings him up along with his daughter. The chaste felicity of our first parents is not more interesting than the affection of these two children of the desart. What Voltaire said of love, as it is painted by Milton, is perfectly applicable to Southey's *Thalaba:* in other poems it is a weakness, but in this it is a virtue. The angelic purity of Oneiza, and her cruel destiny, have inspired the poet with some of his most tender and brilliant

passages. Thalaba delivers his mistress from the profane paradise of Aloadin, and prevails on her to marry him before the accomplishment of his mission. She reluctantly consents. The nuptial ceremonies are minutely described, hymns of joy are sung, and the book ends with these verses :—

"And now the marriage feast is spread,
And from the finished banquet now
The wedding guests are gone.
* * * *
Who comes from the bridal chamber?
It is Azrael, the angel of death."

The next book opens with Thalaba mourning over the tomb of Oneiza, exposed to the fury of the tempest. There he is met by the father of his bride, and the shade of Oneiza rises up to console him, and encourage him to proceed on his holy enterprise. He sets out on his lonely way, and on the first night of his wandering, he is hospitably received by a venerable dervise. As they are sitting at their humble repast, a nuptial procession passes by with dance and song. The old dervise pronounces a blessing on the joyous party, but Thalaba looked on, "and breathed a low, deep groan, and hid his face."

The little episode of Laila is, also, extremely pleasing. Amidst a desart of snow, a sudden light breaks upon the eyes of Thalaba. He advances, and discovers that this light proceeds from

" A little lowly dwelling-place
Amid a garden, whose delightful air
Felt mild and fragrant, as the evening wind
Passing in summer o'er the coffee-groves
Of Yemen, and its blessed bowers of balm.
A fount of fire that in the centre play'd,
Rolled all around its wond'rous rivulets,
And fed the garden with the heat of life."

He enters and finds a damsel sleeping, who afterwards informs him, that she was placed there by her father, a magician, who " saw a danger in her horoscope," and hid her in that solitude. He has also constructed a guardian of the garden, which is a brazen figure, grasping a thunderbolt. As soon as Thalaba appears,

" The charmed image knew Hodeirah's son,
And hurled the lightning at the dreaded foe."

He is saved by means of an enchanted ring which he has in his possession. But the old magician appears, and tells Thalaba, that he must either sacrifice the innocent girl or perish himself. Laila throws her arms round her father's neck. Her face is turned to Thalaba. The wind agitating the fiery fountain casts a broad light over her features; her eyes rolling with horror watch every movement of Thalaba. He refuses to stain his hands in the blood of innocence. The magician exulting, draws his dagger. All is accomplished. Laila, who rushes between them to save the youth, receives the fatal blow. She falls, and

Azrael receives her parting soul from the hands of Thalaba.

I cannot close this brief analysis, without transcribing one of the many beautiful pictures with which the poem abounds. I would recommend the following to the magical pencil of my friend, P. Delaroche. It is a description of Alaodin's paradise:—

"And oh! what odours the voluptuous vale
Scatters from jasmine bowers,
From yon rose wilderness,
From clustered henna, and from orange groves
That with such perfume fill the breeze,
As Peris to their sister bear,
When from the summit of some lofty tree
She hangs, encaged, the captive of the Dives.
They from their pinions shake
The sweetness of celestial flowers;
And as her enemies impure
From that impetuous poison far away
Fly groaning with the torment, she the while
Inhales her fragrant food.
Such odours flowed upon the world,
When at Mohammed's nuptials, word
Went forth in heaven to roll
The everlasting gates of paradise
Back on their living hinges, that its gales
Might visit all below: the general bliss
Thrill'd every bosom, and the family
Of man, for once, partook a common joy."

The author of *Lalla Rookh* has written nothing which more perfectly breathes the spirit of oriental poetry.

In *Madoc*, another of Southey's poems, the

scene is partly laid in Britain, and partly in America.

Madoc, as well as *Thalaba*, occasionally presents traces of affected simplicity, false energy, artificial enthusiasm, laboured style, tediousness, prolixity, and an unnecessary profusion of harsh sounding names.* But yet it cannot be denied that the author has happily succeeded in combining the inspirations of the three great poets, Ossian, Milton, and Alonzo d'Ercilla. Southey's Welsh bards are more natural and less monotonous than the Caledonian bards of Macpherson, in their descriptions of scenery, and in their warlike and festive hymns. The laureate has happily retraced some of those images which constitute the charm of the melancholy song of Selma. His Ossianic harp breathes forth the music of a new world, where he seems to have discovered chords hitherto unknown to Christian bards. Its inspirations are addressed to savages, but for the purpose of refining their feelings, and not for the celebration of sanguinary obsequies. The episode of *Caradoc* may almost be regarded as an allegory.

Two chiefs, the Nisus and Euryalus of the Indians, make a nocturnal sortie, and in the neighbourhood of the Christian camp, surprise a sleep-

* Boileau says:

"——————— un seul nom barbare
Rend un poème entier ridicule ou bizarre."

I entirely concur in this opinion, with respect to French poems, in particular; but yet I would ask, whether Childebrandt is a harsher name than Clytemnestra?

ing warrior, whom Thalaba, surnamed the *Tiger of War*, proposes to sacrifice, in the hope that an offering of human blood will propitiate the gods, and be the pledge of his nation's success. He creeps like a serpent to the spot, where Caradoc, in his slumbers, is dreaming of his native home, and the blue eyed maid whom he loves. He raises his lance and is about to strike his victim, when suddenly the morning breeze, gently sweeping the strings of the Cambrian warrior's harp, produces heavenly strains of melody. The savage stops, looks round him with amazement; no mortal is near him; and in a moment all is silent. The ærial music again falls on his astonished ear, and then again suddenly ceases. The savage for the first time feels the influence of terror. He thinks a friendly genius watches over the stranger, and he shrinks confounded from the fulfilment of his murderous purpose.

This invisible protection of the harp, appears to me a beautiful poetic idea. The captivity of Hoel and Madoc, and their deliverance by a priestess of the false gods; and the death of Coatel and her lover, are incidents which excite the liveliest interest. In several energetic passages, and also where the poet expresses religious sentiments, he soars to a level with Milton; but when he describes the manners of the savages, their councils of war, the religious ceremonies, their combats, and the magnificent scenery of the new world, he approximates to the style of Alonzo de Ercilla, while at the same time, he evinces more

correct judgment, and purer taste, than the Spanish poet.

The history of Madoc is founded on a tradition which attributes the discovery of the American continent in the twelfth century to a Welch prince, who fled from his native land to avoid civil war and the hatred of a cruel brother. The posterity of the Welch adventurers who at that period emigrated to the New World, are said still to exist on the banks of the Missouri. Nearly about the same time, the Aztecas, an American tribe, forsook their original country and founded the Mexican empire, so called in honour of their tutelary deity Mexitli. Their emigration is, by Southey, connected with the adventures of Madoc, and the poet describes their superstitions, such as the Spaniards found them among their descendants. This poem was criticised with unjust severity in the *Edinburgh Review*, in an article written by Jeffrey. A burlesque description is given of the events and characters; but Voltaire made parodies almost as grotesque on Homer and Milton. It will readily be supposed that prejudices were raised against a poem which was treated thus cavalierly by the reviewers. A great portion of readers are often satisfied with the mere analysis of a work. It is convenient for ignorance "to meet with ready made opinions, and mediocrity is always gratified at the opportunity of aiming a blow at genius."

The poem which followed *Madoc*, in spite of all its magnificence, could not dazzle the critics who had parodied Southey's three preceding works.

The *Curse of Kehama* would be the most extravagant of poems, but that the author has so completely thrown aside his European character, and so happily identified himself with his subject, that the work appears like a brilliant version of one of the numerous national epopees of the Brahmins, transmitted to Europe by the college of Calcutta. The author must be regarded as singularly successful in having excited any other sentiment than curiosity by a work borrowed from the most fanciful of mythologies, in which we are by turns transported from heaven to hell; and the principal characters of which are a king endowed with almost all the attributes of the gods, a man struck by a singular curse, a wandering spectre, a witch, a glendoveer, a genius, and other super-human beings of various orders. The only creature who belongs to this world is frequently transported into the invisible regions, and is at length admitted to the rank of the immortal genii. The interest of the poem arises out of the sweetest of mortal affections, that which is a virtue among all nations, namely, filial piety. Kaylial is the poet's grand talisman; he frequently appears like one of Raphael's virgins singularly placed among the extravagant figures of a Chinese skreen. Kehama, the proud and ambitious tyrant of India, also rises to a level with the gloomy energy and infernal majesty of Milton's Satan.

The story is founded on a singularity in the religious faith in the Hindoos, who believe that prayers, seconded by penance and sacrifices, have a power independent of the motives of him by

whom they are addressed to heaven. To use the term employed by Mr. Southey in his prefatory remarks, they are *bills* drawn upon the gods, the payment of which cannot be refused. The wicked in this manner may obtain a degree of power which renders them formidable to the deities themselves.

Thus does the Rajah Kehama, the hero of Southey's poem, threaten to usurp the prerogatives of the gods, and to render them obedient to his sovereign caprice. In the meanwhile, however, he is visited by some of the misfortunes incident to human nature. Arvalan, his only son, is killed by a peasant, to whose daughter he attempted to offer violence. The poem opens with a description of the magnificent funeral of Arvalan. Kehama orders his guards to conduct to his presence Ladurla[1], the peasant, and his daughter Kaylial, on whom he has vowed to take revenge. Kaylial, however, clings to the statue of Manataly, the tutelary goddess of the poor, which stands on the banks of the Ganges, where the funeral rites are celebrated. A thousand arms, obedient to the tyrant's voice, endeavour to tear her away; but the offended deity hurls the image into the water, and with it the suppliant Kaylial, and the satellites who presumed to lay their sacrilegious hands upon her. Khaema then turns to the father, and summoning all his power for one great effort of malice, pronounces on him the curse whence the poem derives its name. A charm is to preserve him from the effects of wounds and violence, sick-

ness, infirmity, and old age; but he is doomed not to be wet with water, nor fanned with wind; and to pass his days without sleep, with a fire in his heart and in his brain.

Ladurlad wanders horror-struck and solitary along the banks of the river, and he soon observes the image of Manataly floating on the stream, with his daughter still clinging to it. The curse pronounced by Kehama gives him the power of rescuing Kaylial. The flood separates at his approach and he bears his daughter in safety to the shore. However he soon feels all the misery of the lot to which he is doomed; and Kaylial is haunted by the spectre of Arvalan. The good genius by whom she is protected falls a victim to the Rajah; and the latter is, by a last sacrifice, on the point of attaining the climax of his ambition. He raises an axe, to slaughter a wild horse, which would be profaned if touched by a mortal hand, when a man rushes wildly forward, regardless of the arrows and javelins which fall like hail around him, and by touching the steed, destroys the virtue of the sacrifice. This is no other than Ladurlad, who, by the curse, is rendered invulnerable to the further vengeance of Kehama. The prince vents his fury on his own guards, whose massacre is described in strains of energetic poetry.

Ladurlad quits the scene of carnage, and wanders back to the happy home of his youth. His emotions, his recollections, and the impressions excited by every object he beholds have furnished

the subject of one of those scenes in which Southey excels, and the natural colouring of which is to me more charming than all the magical decorations of his ideal world. Ladurlad subsequently enjoys some cessation from his misery on Mount Meru, under the protection of Indra. But his trials, and those of his daughter, return as soon as Arvalan discovers their retreat. The glendoveer Eremia himself solicits the aid of Ladurlad and his daughter. He is a captive in the tomb of Baly, an ancient monarch, whose temple was formerly buried beneath the ocean. The description of this sub-marine city presents a novel and beautiful picture.

"Their golden summits in the noon-day light,
Shone o'er the dark-green deep that roll'd between;
For domes and pinnacles, and spires were seen
Peering above the sea—a mournful sight!
Well might the sad beholder ween from thence,
What works of wonder the devouring wave
Had swallowed there, when monuments so brave
Bore record of their old magnificence.
And on the sandy shore, beside the verge
Of ocean, here and there a rock-hewn fane
Resisted in its strength the surf and surge
That on their deep foundations beat in vain.
In solitude the ancient temples stood,
Once resonant with instrument and song,
And solemn dance of festive multitude;
Now as the weary ages pass along,
Heaving no voice save of the ocean flood,
Which roars for ever on the restless shores;
Or, visiting their solitary caves,
The lonely sound of winds, that moan around,
Accordant to the melancholy waves."

But I cannot follow Ladurlad into the empire of the ocean, or accompany him in the other mi-

raculous pilgrimages which he makes in company with his daughter, and the glendoveer whom he has released. Mr. Southey's fertile imagination has painted all in glowing colours, the Padalon, the Pandæmonium of the Hindoos, and Mount Calvary, or their Elysium. Suffice it to say, that the impious Kehama at length meets with his merited punishment, and the patience and piety of the fair Kaylial are rewarded.

I might multiply extracts to an endless length; for there is not a canto of the poem in which I have not marked with my pencil many passages of striking beauty; such as the sacrifice of the wives of Arvalan, and particularly the lovely Nealliny, the description of a morning and evening scene in Hindostan, the banian tree and the elephant, the grove in which Kaylial worships the gods, her prayer to Manataly, her declarations of filial piety, her somewhat mystical love for the glendoveer, her first interview with the shade of her mother, &c. But as I shall again recur to Mr. Southey, I here abandon *Kehama* to say a few words respecting his last epic poem.

Roderick the Last of the Goths is not the most brilliant or varied of the laureate's compositions, though it was produced in the full maturity of his genius, and has been highly admired by all classes of readers. The gentle affections are not indeed excluded from this poem; but its interest is derived from emotions of a more energetic nature. Impassioned exaltation distinguishes all the cha-

racters, and even their virtues have an air of fanaticism. Had Sir Walter Scott undertaken the task of relating the same events, pourtraying the same characters, describing the poetic land of Spain, the christian and moorish knights, their costumes, manners, and conflicts, how much would the picture have gained in brilliancy of colouring, spirit, and picturesque contrast! How many graceful and natural details would have amused the reader, without diverting his attention from the main circumstances of the story. That troubadour of the *gaya ciencia* would have mingled with the clang of arms and the cries of fury and revenge; some of those melting strains which would have delighted the lady and her youthful pages, and have won even a smile from the aged warrior. But the author of *Roderick* is merely an inspired monk, who records only the regrets of love, and makes his warriors fight only under the banner of the cross. His poetry is energetic, noble, frequently sublime, but always solemn; and in its harmonious rhythm, one might almost recognise a resemblance to the monotonous music of the convent bells. Yet this religious character has its appropriate effect in the poem. Spain is contending with the infidels for the recovery of her faith and her glory. The proud enemy of her triumphs perseveres in his cruelty and oppression. His shouts of victory are threats. The vanquished overwhelmed with disgrace, scarcely venture to utter a complaint. They

stifle the voice of vengeance until the signal for insurrection shall be given. At length hatred and resentment burst forth, and a deadly war ensues.

On his return from Spain and Portugal, Southey admirably represented the character and opinions of a Spaniard, but a Spaniard of the nineteenth century, in his amusing letters of Don Manuel Espriella. He afterwards studied what he terms the monkish spirit, to qualify himself to attack catholicism with her own arms in the *Quarterly Review*. He was at the same time deeply imbued with the fanaticism of the secretaries of Joanna Southcote and Wesley, of whom he became the biographer. All this serves to explain the natural way in which he maintains the character of the enthusiastic monk in *Don Roderick*. His profound knowledge of Spanish literature, and particularly of the chronicles, also proved a powerful aid to him. Roderick is a *Spanish*, and above all a *catholic* poem; the protestant poet has no existence but on the title page. The principal idea of the work is romantic, but original. A remnant of grandeur, and glory, elevate the character of the fallen king. His penitence in the desart, his mysterious return among his subjects, the trials of his new mission, the immense sacrifice his devotedness costs him, the powerful influence of his presence, and the last exploit of his enthusiasm and valour, all serve to invest him with the attributes of super-human heroism. The characters of Julian and his daughter are not less happily

conceived, and their various interviews with the king are very impressive. Adosinda, the Judith of the poem, is pourtrayed with infinite ability, and among the secondary characters, what a high degree of interest is excited by the good Severian, whom Homer might have envied for his Odyssey, and the mother of Roderick, who is so worthy to share all his sacrifices, and whose pious tears gain a celestial crown for her dethroned son. *

* * * * *

I have done for the present with the author of *Joan of Arc*, *Thalaba*, *Madoc*, *Roderick*, &c. I eagerly look forward to the moment when I shall meet him on the banks of the Derwent-Water.

LETTER LXVII.

TO MADAME EMILIE DE M——L.

THERE are some English poets of the present day who are essentially religious, and who I think may be considered as belonging to the lake school, as for example, Kirke White and Montgomery. I have already observed that the methodists and other dissenting sects have their poets. Even the quakers have their bard in the person of Bernard Barton.

The writings of Montgomery and Kirke White owe their continued success to the pious members of the English church, who would have scrupled at giving Byron and Moore a place in their library. Kirke White is the Andre Chenier of England; not because the unfortunate poet was carried away by a political storm; but he died a victim to his zeal for study at the age of one and twenty, with the same regret as A. Chenier, of not having been able to give full wing to his talents. This young poet, replete with fire and tenderness, had received, with the revelation of the secret favours with which the muse had endowed him, the presentiment of his approaching end. From the age of thirteen, Kirke White had measured the brevity of his days, and commenced the song of the *Swan*. It was to the grave he addressed his tenderest dreams of poetical renown. The flower which he sung and cherished with peculiar predilection was the rosemary, a plant which in England is placed in the coffins, and he invoked it to exhale its fugitive perfume in the solitude of his tomb. Imbued with these melancholy ideas, he saw nothing but God in the future, and translated psalms, as if for the purpose of exercising himself in joining his voice to that of the concert of angels; or he described his first sorrows, his first affections, his first games, while he associated these reflections to those of the caresses of his mother, or his little tribulations as a schoolboy. From the earliest age the life of this world had only an ephemeral interest in his eyes;

he saw nothing but God and eternity. One is astonished to find so much elevation and elegance, so much philosophy and tender piety in the poems of so young a man. His poem entitled *Childhood*, composed at the age of thirteen, exhibits more than one graceful painting of which Goldsmith might have been jealous. The portrait of his old school-mistress is a counterpart to that of the schoolmaster in the *Deserted Village*.

So much imagination and susceptibility could not even suffer extinction in the office of a solicitor, where the young poet was for some time articled, before he could obtain means of going to college at Oxford. The studies of the university exhausted his strength, and he died with the regret of not having completed his poem of the *Christiad*.

Milton created sacred poetry in England. He is at all events the only model of all those who, notwithstanding the decree of Boileau,*

> "De la foi du Chretien les mysteres terribles
> D'ornaments *egayés* ne sont pas susceptibles,"

have chosen christian subjects for the epic poem. The author of *Paul and Virginia* is the only one capable of vying with the fourth canto of *Paradise Lost*. The two poems of Milton have produced in Germany the *Messiah of Klopstock*, and the

* As the question here concerns epic poetry, Boileau might have been required to specify the sense of the epithet which he attaches to the word *ornamens*.

pastoral in six cantos called the *Death of Abel*, which I could not read at college without weeping; but which, perhaps, would now produce on me the same impression as it did on Lord Byron, in whose eyes the German Abel was always a tiresome and insignificant personage. Montgomery combines in himself the qualities of Milton, of Klopstock, and Gesner. His poem of the *World before the Flood* is a continuation of the *Paradise Lost;* but it is like the arkite dove attempting to vie with the eagle; the branch of olive better becomes her grasp than the thunderbolt. If the poet sometimes attempts to depict the proud giants of the posterity of Cain, he is more at home in picturing the loves of Javan and of Zillali: but it is not for the purpose of lavishing that meretricious vesture on the young daughter of Seth, with which the voluptuous Thomas Moore adorns his heroines. Montgomery's poem exhibits as much sensibility as that of Gesner, united with a poetry of a more *epic description, even in the pastoral scenes.* Sometimes a regret is felt that an eloquent paraphrase, but tinctured with a little too much amplification, should take the place of that energetic and daring conciseness which the same situation, or the same conception, would have inspired to the English Homer. One may infer from this circumstance what little discrimination there was in Johnson's opinion, when he said that Milton wrote in blank verse, because he did not know how to rhyme. *The World before the Flood* is in heroic couplet: it is true

the verses gain thereby in harmony what they lose in austere energy.

The argument is the condition of the world, when the vices of the sons of Cain are beginning to exhaust the patience of the Almighty. The giants had already invaded the vicinity of Eden, where Enoch yet maintained the worship of the true God in the midst of the posterity of Seth. In the camp of the victors is Javan, a young orphan, who has deserted his former brothers, the just, in order to pursue the phantom of a perfectly terrestrial glory. While he grew up beneath the care of his mother, he had resisted the vague impulses of his ambition.

His home was precious for his mother's sake. But when he had deposited in the tomb the last remains of that tender mother, the counsels of Enoch were insufficient to restrain his wandering propensity. He had become the pupil of Jabal, and the private minstrel of the giant king; but favour and fortune still left a void in his heart. At the sight of the spot of his birth, and that where his mother's bones reposed, he is moved by the recollections of his childhood, and of the first love which Zillah, formerly his young companion, had inspired him.

These reminiscences constituted a double talisman for the preservation of his virtue in the society of the wicked. They at length restore him to himself; and Javan solemnly vows to live and die among his own kindred. He quits the enemy's army alone, and reaches the embowered scene of

his parting with Zillah. There he finds the young beauty herself asleep beneath the shade of a laurel grove, and who in her dreams is still murmuring the name of *Javan*, and *farewell*. Javan withdraws a little from the spot, and plays on the flute, an instrument the invention of which the poet attributes to him.

"At once obedient to the lip and hand," &c.

Zillah awakes, and still imagines that the image of him she beheld in her dreams is standing before her. Javan then appears, but without daring to make himself known, and Zillah, feigning not to recognize him, retires, after indicating to him the dwelling of Enoch.

Enoch embraces his old pupil, and tells him in the midst of his satisfaction at beholding him, that he has wept many nights for him, and for live-long days expected anxiously this his joyful return.

Javan apprizes him of the approach of the king of the giants, and urges him to fly with his people; but Enoch has received a celestial admonition, which supports his hopes, and he signifies his resolution to confront the presence of the guilty. That very day is the anniversary of the death of Adam, celebrated by a sacrifice at his tomb.

Montgomery (mysticising a little in this place) has made the sepulchre of the first man, like those Moravian cemeteries, which are adorned with arbutuses and flowers, and to which the designation of the *garden of the dead* may be appropriately

applied. Enoch gives an account of the last moments of Adam; and it is this narrative of the patriarch which unites the poem of Montgomery with that of Milton. After a long alternation of fear and hope, which awaken in the heart of the dying father of men the memory of his fall, and a confidence in the mercy of God, Adam expires in the midst of a storm.

After the sacrifice, Javan discovers himself to Zillah, and obtains her pardon; but she at the same time reminds him of the danger which menaces them, and which forbids their thinking of terrestrial love. In fine, the happy valley is invaded, and the family of the just are carried captive to the camp of the giants. Their leader is one of those personifications of the evil principle so common with poets and novelists, and which Mr. Montgomery has not been able to revive in an original form. Since then Southey has produced his *Kehama* and the *Erotic*, T. Moore has sketched his Mokanna (the *veiled prophet*), after the same common model, though varied by the introduction of eccentric attributes. Montgomery's King of the Giants has the misfortune, in consequence of the affinities of the subject, to recall the image of Milton's Satan, whose gloomy majesty eclipses all subaltern imitations. In one passage alone, the leader of the sons of Cain rises to the level of the audacious spirit of the rebel angel, when leaving his companions to intoxicate themselves with the praises of their exploits, and alone forgetful of all his terrestrial victories,

he dreams of reconquering Paradise, of which the Almighty had disinherited the race of Adam. The flames of the fiery swords borne in the hands of the celestial army, commissioned to defend the gate of Eden, only serve to irritate his ambition. The bosom of the giant beats with the vast design he has conceived; and he burns with impatience to scale those frowning heights, and carry by storm those battlements of fire.

The poet has given as a counsellor to this terrible monarch, a species of magician leagued with the fallen angels. He is the Mathan of the poem, as opposed to Enoch, who is the Joad: and in the prophecies of Enoch, Mr. Montgomery has availed himself of the text of Isaiah, which Racine* has translated into divine versification. Like the French poet, he would have found his account in adopting the lyrical rhythm, which is admirably well adapted to prophetic enthusiasm, and in which he has elsewhere proved that he excels.

The patriarchs are doomed to be sacrificed to the false gods. Javan is about to be the first in ascending the fatal pyre, when Zillah associates herself with him, in order to share his death. She unites in her person the characters of Olinda and

* Montgomery has also introduced into his poem the following verse from *Athalie* citing it in a note.

"Le crains Dieu, cher Abner, et nai point d'autro crainte."

"They feared their God, and knew no other fear."

A circumstance which I the more readily notice, because the English depreciators of Racine, such as Hazlitt, affect to consider this verse as very flat when compared with that of *Sylla:*

"Jai gouverné sants peur, et l'abdique sans crainte."

Sophronia. Enoch then advances, and confounds the foes of God by holy denunciations. The entire wrath of the Giant King and his magician directs itself against him; but the chosen servant of God disappears. The captives behold him ascending triumphantly to heaven. Javan receives his last look, and his prophetic garment. The spirit of the translated patriarch descends on him. "Where is the God of Enoch?" he exclaims. "Prisoners follow me; ye men of sin fall back;" and he traverses the ranks of the astonished giants with Zillah and all the family of Seth. On the following day the rebel army attack the heights of Eden, and are repulsed by hail, thunder, and the fiery swords of the cherubim. The king perishes by the hands of his followers, and peace reigns in the happy valley till the day of the universal deluge.

The poem of Montgomery is replete with rich details. It is redolent with that poetical perfume which the inspiration of the holy scriptures exhales; but it possesses, as I have already said, more grace and harmony than force and originality. The same character appertains to his *Wanderer of Switzerland*, although in the latter work, which preceded the other, the poet is inflamed with a patriotic indignation, and seeks support in the more rapid movement of the lyrical rhythm. But here the rhythm is a defect, because it is applied to the dramatic form of dialogue, which in English is better adapted for blank verse. The *Wanderer of Switzerland* is an old man, whom the

invasion of the French has compelled to emigrate, with such relics of his family as had escaped the hostile sword. He is hospitably received into the cabin of a shepherd boy, to whom he relates his battles, and the misfortunes of his countrymen. The idea of his absent country supplies the emigrant with imagery, alternately affecting and sublime; and his complaints induce us to sympathize with his natal mountains and hamlets, as if they were animated beings.

The poems on the *Slave Trade* and *Greenland*, display an equal quantity of beauties of the first order. Montgomery has also been successful in a number of lyrical pieces, chiefly remarkable for their melancholy and unaffected sentiment. There is one of these pieces, the origin of which refutes the miserable irony with which the *Edinburgh Review* has always referred to "poor Montgomery and his sentimental mania." A short time after the publication of his first essays, the poet received a letter from a lady, who described herself as converted by illness to the charms of a plaintive poetry. A correspondence ensued between her and the poet, whose letters and verses succeeded in comforting the last days of the sufferer. After her departure to a better world, Montgomery learned her name, and found that his imagination had depicted her exactly as she was. The event furnished him with the subject of a poem, expressive of his grief, and of his pious friendship.

In this the poet compares the direct commerce of poetry with an inhabitant of paradise, to the

mysterious ladder which the patriarch Jacob perceived in his dream. Even when divested of the charms of its versification, the poem referred to, appears to me to exhibit a curious example of the spiritualism of a class of English poets, whose poetical creed is often allied to catholicism. Montgomery belongs to the sect of Moravian brothers.

LETTER LXVIII.

TO MR. CH. NODIER.

The grand nazir, or chamberlain to the daughter of Aurenz-Zeb, is not so foolish a personage as Mr. Moore has wished to make him. His decision in Lalla Rookh on the subject of the Persian poet's flowery style, is, nevertheless, too exclusive; it is not worthy of the "supreme judge in all things, from the proper form of the eyelashes of a young Circassian, down to the deepest questions in science and literature; from the composition of a conserve of roses to the composition of an epic poem." Is not this portrait of Fadladin, at the same time, the portrait of Thomas Moore, author of several humourous poems, enriched with learned notes? Chaulieu, Panard, Parny, and, in our time, Beranger, Desangiers, Francis, &c., who have sung of the same subjects

as Thomas Moore, have forgotten to apprise the public that they knew Greek, and that they had read the *Bibliotheque Orientale d'Herbelot.* Notwithstanding his scientific language, Thomas Moore is not less the favourite poet of the English ladies; his sentimental songs are upon all the pianos, and his voluptuous sonnets are discovered beside the Bible in the boudoirs. It will be objected to me, for the sake of saving the honour of the chaste daughters of modest Albion, that I have never been permitted entrance into this *sanctum sanctorum,* and I readily admit that I am only repeating in this place the private rumours of scandal, or the public accusations of Mr. Irving from the apostolic chair. But, however that may be, one of the prominent imputations which the English bring against us, is that of reckoning Parny among the number of our poets; without going farther back, we may reply, that Moore, his contemporary, has given a Parny to English poetry. After perusing the amorous trifles published under the fictitious name of Little, and the very free paraphrase of Anacreon, dedicated to the Prince Regent, who, at that time, performed the part of Polycrates to the Irish Anacreon, and after surveying, in some drawing-room, the mignonne physiognomy of the poet, one would be tempted to depict him in the midst of the beauties of the court of Windsor, or rather in one of the boudoirs of Madame Pompadour, canvassing for the smile of some favourite or powerful libertine, with his melodious voice and somewhat effe-

minate verses; but it would occasion some surprise to observe this little poet of the bedchamber, while luxuriously reclined upon a sofa, suddenly passing from a languishing sonnet, or an eulogium upon Lalage, or a brimming goblet of wine, to a coarse satire against the Bourbons or the priests. Let us, however, do him the justice to say, that he instantly breaks off his amorous descant when called upon to pour forth a nobler effusion in the cause of liberty, or a daring protest, in favour of oppressed Ireland; at such times, he resembles Parny, composing national odes in the manner of Beranger. Are we to attribute this alliance of *coquetterie*, voluptuousness, and independence, to poetic vanity, which is quite as much an English as a French defect? Shall I venture to explain the contradictions of the author of *Lalla Rookh*, by endeavouring to prove that he has been mistaken in considering himself a republican, because it is difficult to be so without having the proper temperament? Mr. Moore acts the democrat in the boudoirs; and it is, perhaps, no more than an *inconsequence*, like that which he has committed in making a liberal *troubadour of the King of Bucharia*.*

Mr. Moore is accordingly accused of being liberal after the fashion adopted by princes; that is

* Besides, the disguised lover of Lalla Rookh was only a prince royal, like George IV. when he associated with the opposition; or like a certain German prince, to whom *Mademoiselle B*—— said, behind the scenes of the *Comedie Francaise*, "Ah! I perceive why your lordship is so liberal—you are not at the head of affairs."

to say, of being jealous of those who are a little more so than himself, and of wishing to prescribe arbitrary limits to liberalism. This is the charge of Leigh Hunt, and of Lord Byron's little court at Pisa; and it is echoed by Hazlitt and other critics; they complain bitterly that Mr. Moore holds them cheap, refuses to contribute to their journal, and recommends his noble friend not to make common cause with radicals of the second order. Mr. Moore appertains to that numerous *coterie* of the tory party, who take upon themselves a portion of the functions of the whigs, in order to prevent their being fulfilled by honest reformers; a circumstance which would bring liberal truths into direct collision with the interests of the privileged orders. These pseudo-whigs enjoy all the advantages of popularity, added to the possession of rank, and the immense privileges of the English aristocracy. In making their attacks on public corruption, they take good care to measure their blows; they defend liberty, not as if she were a queen whose soldiers they are, but as if she were a captive, whose spoils they hold in reserve; corruptions in other nations excite all their indignation; and they cannot find sufficiently strong expressions, in order to mark them with their brand. The Bourbons are tyrants, France a country of slaves, whom they encourage to a just revolution, while their straight-laced opposition is incapable of inspiring them on the subject of their own concerns, with more than the eloquence of the speciaf

pleader. Their business is to exclude the radicals from office as well as from the drawing-room. It is in the latter where Thomas Moore amuses his illustrious amphitryons, by his pathetic sighs for English liberty, and by his alternately coarse and witty squibs against the despots and ultras of the continent; it is there that the noblest genius of constitutional France is calumniated, the Burke of the French monarchy—he who by his writings has converted so many royalists to the charter, and so many liberals to royalty; it is there that he is pronounced a great sycophant and mere maker of phrases. But since a mask of public morality was requisite to these liberal aristocrats, for the support of English dignity, their poet was not allowed to continue his lascivious madigrals. For some time, therefore, Thomas Moore has become moral and almost chaste. Let us follow him through the history of his various writings; we shall find him more superficial than profound, more tender than pathetic, more graceful than energetic; addressing the heart rather than the mind; but still on all occasions an amiable poet, sometimes a great poet, and almost always embued with imagination, wit, and taste. I think it is Diderot who affirms, that in order to write well on the subject of females, it would be requisite to dip the pen in the dyes of the rainbow, and dry the paper with powder borrowed from the wings of the butterfly. It might be imagined, that Thomas Moore had employed this recipe, in order to compose his oriental imagery, and depict

his Peris, or not less brilliant mortal fairies; there is so prodigious a luxury of metaphors and ornaments lavished on his verses, that they may be styled a selection of poetical arabesques.

The Grand Nazir of the Mogul Princess might have added to the above noticed critique, that the elements of Thomas Moore's poetry consist in the ingenious distribution of divers butterfly wings, angel plumes, beams of light, pearls, precious stones, perfumes, &c. All these fictitious appendages do not always adorn perfect beauties; but, as paste and false diamonds produce enchanting metamorphoses at the opera, with the aid of singing and music, the poet operates an illusion by the magic of his pictures and the melody of his verses. He has carried this melody farther than any English poet since Chaucer: Thomas Moore's poetry is almost Italian. This melody was already conspicuous in his first pieces, addressed to Julia, Rose, Jessy, Bessy, Mary, and to thirty other married beauties, whom the discreet Mr. Little designates by three asterisks. The little Parny of Ireland had more than one Eleonora. The collection consists of elegant epigrams against marriage, or gallant sophisms on the facility of entering paradise. Accordingly, after telling Julia that she will be sentenced to perdition, Mr. Little qualifies the announcement, and consoles her by saying, that love has made her so beautiful, that she will only have to present herself at heaven's gate, when the saints will mistake her for a virgin, and open it.

"You so like an angel smile,
They can't but let you in."*

In the subsequent piece, which contains a heresy of another kind, the soul of woman was understood by Mahomet alone; they are toys, dolls without reason, and without ideas.

"Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire."
CATULLUS.

But Catullus soon after falls into a bad humour, and ridicules a poor dowager, who, doubtless, had made him an overture. He drily informs her that he is no admirer of antiquity, that Diana herself could not seduce him in her wane, and that he would send her to hell in order to perform the part of Hecate. Horace did not treat Canidia worse, for I have not told the whole. But it is Rose's turn; she weeps; Mr. Little proves to her that it is with pleasure, and swears to make her weep for ever in the same manner. One should rather guess that Rose had been weeping, after hearing the morality of that other effusion, wherein her lover tells her, that since the casuists have affirmed that a single wish may damn us, and since she must, at least, have had such a wish, the best thing she can do, is to enjoy the sin first, and be damned after. But adieu to Rose. Her volatile lover surprises Jessey asleep; he tells Phillis that

* This idea is reproduced elsewhere, with less taste, when the poet tells Phillis, that a kiss is paradise to him, but that her lip is the only St. Peter who keeps the key—

"Your lip, love, is only St. Peter."

she is a prude not to give him her heart, and to make such a difficulty "about a trifle;" he then reminds Fanny of a certain journey they had in the mail coach.*

He asks his mistress * * * to a *petit souper*.†

> "Over a little attic feast,
> As full of cordial soul at least,
> As those when Delia met Tibullus,
> Or Lesbia wantoned with Catullus,
> I'll sing you many a roguish sonnet,
> About it, at it, and upon it," &c.

Finally, in the sonnet called the *Catalogue*, Mr. Little reviews all the beauties who have loved him, from Kitty, who taught him his first lesson, down to the little female saint Susan. Without excepting the latter, it will be seen that the friends of Mr. Little were not of the most scrupulous virtue; and accordingly all these poetical effusions interest us very little. But I shall attempt to translate some stanzas which express a melancholy emotion, to which no one who has not escaped the tender errors, (for which I should, after all, be sorry that my readers should be too severe on Mr. Moore's youth,) can expect to remain a stranger.

> "As-tu donc remarqué la rêveuse tristesse
> Qui d'un voile importun couvre soudain mes yeux
> Au milieu des transports que seule, ô ma maîtresse,
> Tu peux faire connaître à mon cœur amoureux?

* Quadrigis petimus bena vivere.

† Cœnam non sine Candida puella.

CATULLUS.

Non, ne crois pas alors que dans tes bras j'oublie,
Combien à ton amour je dois de volupté,
Quel cœur plus que le mien épris de ta beauté,
Serait plus enivré de ta douce magie!

Ah! lorsque je te vois, fuyant l'éclat du jour,
Incliner sur mon sein ta tête languissante,"
Puis n'ouvrir qu'à demi ta paupière tremblante,
Rougissant de montrer même à moi tant d'amour,

De ces instans si doux qui n'envierait le charme?...
Eh bien, c'est même alors, quand tout doit t'embellir,
Que dans mes yeux je sens se glisser une larme,
Et que mon cœur ne peut étouffer un soupir.

Un souvenir jaloux me dit, ô ma Julie!
Qu'un autre, le premier, fit palpiter ton cœur;
Qu'il te vit, comme moi, par l'amour embellie;
Comme moi dans tes bras qu'il connut le bonheur.

Peut-être prononcé par ta bouche charmante,
Son nom de tous les noms devenait le plus doux;
Peut-être qu'il te vit et timide et tremblante
Lui sourire et cacher ton front sur ses genoux.

Peut-être .... Mais pourquoi vous rappeler encore,
Indiscrets souvenirs et regrets superflus!
Elle est enfin à moi, la beauté que j'adore,
Et le ciel ne pouvait rien m'accorder de plus.

Pardonne à ton amant, pardonne, ô ma Julie!
Si même le passé peut le rendre jaloux,
Hélas! que ne fût-il le premier de ta vie
Le jour où tu me dis: 'Je n'aimerai que vous.'"

This rhymed translation is rigorously faithful, with the exception of the last stanza, into which I have condensed the two last of the original, where the same idea appears to me repeated in nearly the same terms. But melody cannot be readily translated.

With his charming social verses, and his amiable manners, Mr. Moore succeeded, not only in win-

ning the ear of the ladies, but also of some influential noblemen. He was appointed to a situation in the Vice Admiralty Court at Bermudas, and he embarked for that island, which Shakspeare makes the birth-place of his sylph Ariel. During his leisure moments Mr. Moore did not neglect the muses, and the beauties of the Azores; and on his return to England published a collection of odes, epistles, and fugitive poems, in which he celebrates the enchantments of a climate well calculated to seduce, by its various features, the poet's imagination. Of these pieces, some are rich with brilliant descriptions, while others reproduce the tender emotions with which Mr. Moore delights to inspire himself. He had, however, found the ladies of the Bermudas more fond than beautiful; he treats their husbands still less favourably, telling us that the ancient philosopher, who held that after this life, the men are changed into mules, and the women into turtles, might have seen this metamorphosis nearly accomplished at Bermudas. But it is in the United States that Mr. Moore meets with the greatest disappointments; it is more especially the United States which have reason to complain of his Epistles, dated from Washington City, and Lake Erie. Mr. Moore affirms that he departed for America with favourable prepossessions. He had pictured American liberty to himself as the divinity of a Republican Utopia. He was shocked to find nothing but coarse tradesmen among the democrats, and citizens almost as vulgar among the federalists: a new proof that Mr. Moore is only

a drawing-room liberal, a boudoir demagogue. American liberty springing from commerce, plain, consequently, and somewhat plebeian, appeared to his eyes in the light of vulgar company. He would have wished to find her polite and even capricious; and then he would have considered her worthy of his devotions; but, alas!

> "Like the nymphs of her own withering clime,
> She is olden in youth, she is blasted in prime."
> *Epistle to Lord Forbes.*

According to him, she is cold, avaricious, and possesses all the vices of old maids; not to mention, that in consequence of being corrupted by French philosophy, she is a driveller, who utters nothing but sophisms.

The poor Americans are nothing but merchants, who have made themselves free, in order to make their sovereign a bankrupt, and to support the allegation, is brought the forced quotation of Montesquieu, of which, with Mr. Moore's permission, England may appropriate a portion to herself. It seems that the president of that day, or some other magistrate of the Union, had a favourite negress; and accordingly Mr. Moore sets about turning into ridicule the American Pericles, and his African Aspasia, in the lines commencing,

> "The weary statesman," &c.
> *Epistle to Mr. Hume.*

The spotless glory of Washington is not spared in these diatribes, wherein the poet rises to a lofty flight of composition, while painting one of the

features of the vast American continent, though always, it must be admitted, in the design of humiliating and mortifying the inhabitants. But Mr. Moore was then on his return to Ireland, and about to devote his eminent talents to a national undertaking; that of the *Irish Melodies*.

There can be little doubt that the primitive songs, or lyrical compositions of the rhapsodists, were the spontaneous production of a poetical musician, who struck off the words and the air in the same heat. Subsequently, songs have generally preceded the music. But such is the triumph of music, which is the true universal language, over poetry, which only appertains to one language, that the tune still survives, when the words are lost. The Virgilian Shepherd was thence induced to exclaim, "I remember the air, but I have forgotten the words."

"Numeros memini si verba tenerem."

Ireland possessed an original and popular music, which supplied numerous allusions to its manners, customs, and history, and which still more than the Scotch music deserved that a Burns should render it popular, and consecrate it, as it were, by an alliance with the national poetry. Miss Owenson had already adapted words to some of these airs of old Erin: but to Thomas Moore belongs the merit of assembling almost all of them in one historical record.

"It has been often remarked, and oftener felt,

that our music is the truest of all comments in our history. The tone of defiance, succeeded by the language of despondency—a burst of turbulence dying away into softness—the sorrows of one moment lost in the levities of the next—and all the romantic mixture of mirth and sadness, which is naturally produced by the efforts of a lively temperament to shake off or forget the wrongs which lie upon it; such are the features of our history and character, which we find strongly and faithfully reflected in our music: and there are many airs, which I think it is difficult to listen to without recalling some period or event to which their expression seems peculiarly applicable."

Letter to the Marchioness of Donallan.

The fault of Mr. Moore consists in having too often forgotten this latter consideration, in order to substitute his frivolous ideas in the room of glorious associations, or the regret which was naturally suggested. We have too many verses to Chloris in the Melodies, and not enough of those hymns in honour of Bryan the Brave; not enough of those descriptive songs, which like music convey the mind into the local scenery which they depict. Mr. Moore's Elegies, his amorous complaints, sometimes his complaints of exile, possess no other national and characteristic feature than the name of Erin. The poet speaks of independence and liberty, like a Greek of Athens, and like a rhetorician who has translated

Anacreon. He talks, indeed, of love, but then it is,

"Caton Galant, on Brutus Damaret."

The luxury of the *costumes*, and of the periphrasis in *Lalla Rookh*, tend to persuade us that we are reading an oriental poem; it might be almost called, according to a well-known expression, more Arabic than Arabia. But in the *Irish Melodies*, if Mr. Moore is almost always a remarkable lyrical poet, he is seldom an Irishman, while Burns always remains a Scotchman in his Caledonian melodies. I have said enough to explain the reason; Mr. Moore has composed exclusively for the piano of pretty women. Burns has preserved his somewhat savage independence in his songs; Moore resembles a caged nightingale, who devotes his dulcet voice to an imitation of the airs of the bird-organ. I shall return to this subject when I consider the character of Burns and of the Scotch melodies. I can, however, quote some honourable exceptions to the general tone of the melodies of the Irish Anacreon; *Rich and Rare*, is a fragment rendered exquisite by its affecting simplicity; it describes the voyage of a young virgin, clothed in rich vestures, who on the faith of the virtues of Brien and his people, travels through the entire kingdom, without fear of outrage. *O the sight-entrancing*, is the almost sublime expression of a warrior's enthusiasm at the sight of arms. I must abstain from translation, since divested of their rhythm and their music,

the various specimens would perhaps justify, what Moore himself has modestly said of them in the style of Fadladin—they resemble insects in amber, which are esteemed on account of the precious substance which embalm them. They are in truth more than that. Many of these melodies deserve to be compared to the most affecting elegies of M. de la Martine. Subjoined is a song of liberty, in which sadness and indignation are combined, and which, in the original, may vie with a *Messenienne*, or a song of Beranger:

"Oh! blame not the bard, if he fly to the bowers,
Where pleasure is carelessly smiling at fame;
He was born for much more, and in happier hours,
His soul might have burned with a holier flame;
The string that now languishes loose o'er the lyre,
Might have bent a proud bow to the warrior's dart,
And the lip which now breathes but the song of desire,
Might have poured the full tide of a patriot's heart.

"But alas! for his country—her pride is gone by,
And that spirit is broken, which never would bend,
O'er the ruin her children in secret must sigh,
For 'tis treason to love her, and death to defend.
Unprized are her sons till they've learned to betray;
Undistinguished they live if they shame not their sires,
And the torch that would light them thro' dignity's way,
Must be caught from the pile where their country expires.

"Then blame not the bard, if in pleasure's soft dream,
He should try to forget what he never can heal;
Oh! give but a hope: let a vista but gleam
Through the gloom of his country, and mark how he'll feel.
That instant, his heart at her shrine would lay down
Every passion it nursed, every bliss it adored,
While the myrtle now idly entwined with his crown,
Like the wreath of Harmodius should cover his sword."

Mr. Moore's principal work is *Lalla Rookh*, which exhibits all the affluence and all the defect of his talent. The translation which has been made of it, dispenses me from the trouble of analyzing the fable and the beauties of its detail. I think it is the *Edinburgh Review* which compared the four tales in *Lalla Rookh*, and the framework which unites them, to four beautiful pearls, joined together by a thread of silk and gold. I do not admire the *Veiled Prophet* much. Mokanna is a Germanified exaggeration of Lewis's *Monk*. The *Peri* is a charming composition, founded upon an idea which may be called oriental *marivaudage*, but which entirely partakes of the taste of Arabic fiction. It is curious to compare the following description of Egypt, which I have transfused into a French form for the purpose, with an analogous passage of the *Genie de Christianisme*.

" La Peri Exilée va planer en soupirant sur les palmiers de l'Egypte, sur les grottes et les sépulcres de ses rois. Tantôt elle se plaît à écouter le roucoulement des colombes de la vallée de Rosette ; tantôt elle aime à voir les rayons de la lune se jouer sur les blanches ailes du pélican qui rase les ondes azurées du lac Mœris. Elle admire les vallons et leurs fruits dorés, qu'éclairent les astres sereins de la nuit ; des groupes gracieux de dattiers courbent languissamment leurs têtes couronnées de feuillage ; tels que de jeunes filles que le sommeil appelle à leurs couches de soie, les lis inclinent sur le lac leurs fleurs virginales pour pa-

raître plus frais et plus brillans au retour du soleil, leur bien-amié ; ces antiques tours, ces autels en ruine semblent les restes d'un songe ; le silence de cette solitude magique n'est troublé que par le cri du vanneau ; parfois aussi, lorsque la lune fait fuir les ombres devant son flambeau, une poule-sultane aux ailes de pourpre est aperçue sur une colonne, silencieuse, immobile et brillante comme un oiseau hiéroglyphique.*

The imagery and the descriptions of the *Fire Worshippers* possess all the freshness which distinguishes those of the *Peri;* but in this case there is the attraction of a more powerful interest—a dramatic interest. This original poem, which is a happy mixture of grace and energy, has more than one affinity with Lord Byron's *Bride of Abydos.* Hafed is another Selim, Hinda another Zuleika ; but Moore can afford to sustain a comparison of this description. As to the *Flower of the Harem,* it is composed of a still lighter groundwork than that of the *Peri,* but which Moore, with the poetical voluptuousness peculiar to him, has adorned with an extraordinary luxury of ornament. This *historiette* deserves to be translated into Turkish, and the Odalisques of his sublime highness might incessantly peruse, and re-peruse it. It would appear to them like a voluptuous

* Le Chacal monté sur un piédestal vide, allonge son museau de loup derrière le buste d'un par à tête de bélier. La gazelle, l'autruche, l'ibis, la gerboise, sautent parmi les décombres, tandis que la poule-sultane se tient immobile sur quelques débris, comme un oiseau hiéroglyphique de granit et de porphyre. *Génie du Christianisme.*

emanation of those perfumes by which the captive *Peris* are recorded to be nourished in their golden cages, to which Southey alludes in his *Thalaba*.

What a contrast is there between these "*Delilahs* of the imagination," (as Dryden called the luxury of periphrasis), and the sarcastic truths which Moore, in his moments of humour, addresses in plebeian language to the great powers of the age! There is, it is true, a vulgarity, and sometimes a refinement of triteness, in the *Two-penny Post Bag*, the *Memorial of Tom Crib to Congress*, and the *Fudge Family*. The *Two-penny Post Bag* betrays the absurdities of the English upper classes; and the Prince Regent and his court supply the materials for the poet's bantering vein. I cannot, however, dwell upon it, because every allusion would call for too long a commentary. The *Memorial of Tom Crib to Congress* furnishes excellent lessons to the Holy Alliance; but it is incapable of introduction here; for the humour of it frequently consists in phraseology alone, which is borrowed from the slang dictionary of the "*fancy*." The *Fudge Family* interests us personally; the whole of Paris there enacts a part: that is to say, such as Paris was from 1815 to 1818, with its Russian mountains, its opera, its milliners, its whiskered linen-drapers, and its police scarcely recovered from the surprise of finding itself performing the part of spy for the Bourbons. But the circumstance which appears chiefly to have shocked Mr. Moore in his excur-

sion through France, is the conjoint absence of Buonaparte, and of liberty; a species of contradiction, as ridiculous as that of Lady Morgan, at once a pedant and a jacobin in petticoats, who boasts complacently of being intimately acquainted with the marchioness of *this*, or the duchess of *that*, and in the following page, borrows the most hackneyed *quodlibets* from the jacobin clubs, or from the imperial *corps de garde*. The *Fudge Family* distributes among its various members the vanity of Lady Morgan, her declamatory style, and her absurd *no-meanings*. Mr. Fudge, the head of the family, is a spy of Lord Castlereagh, who sends him the journal of his observations. The leaves of the manuscript occasionally serve as wrappers to little parcels of French embroidery and lace for Lady Castlereagh; and Fudge is enchanted with the circumstance of her ladyship having told her husband that Mr. Fudge's journal contained some very pretty things. Mr. Fudge is a political blockhead; the Seids of our police and the secret agents of England are generally more talented. They would not, for example, be transported by a zeal for legitimacy to such a degree as to write to M. Franchet that they desired to see Rheims, because it contains the mausoleum of a *high* and *puissant* princess of twenty-four hours old.

Mr. Fudge had previously shed tears of joy at the sight of the imprint of the royal foot at Calais, and exclaimed, "*Oh Richard, oh mon Roi!*" Mr. Moore has full permission to smile at these royal-

ist drivellings, which more than one royalist of the nineteenth century heartily laughs at; but he is only vulgar, and not witty, when he compares the foot of any monarch to that of an animal which our poetry can only designate by a circumlocution. The *coarse* is seldom allied to the *humorous.* I prefer the epistle in which Mr. Fudge, invoking classical allegory to the aid of his royalist zeal, discovers that Midas was a very respectable tyrant, and that his fabulous large ears were his spies, listening to all things, understanding all things, and collecting reports for his Majesty's *green bag.* Why, therefore, should not the Prince Regent be endowed with ears like those of the worthy Midas?

"His model, good king Midas," &c.

Success, therefore, to the ears of the Prince Regent! Mr. Fudge is also a friend to the liberty of the press; but, like certain continental ministers, is only willing to encourage such as use without abusing it.

This worthy spy has a son and daughter who accompany his journey, and have also their private correspondence. Miss Biddy relates, with innocent simplicity, her various impressions to her friend Miss Doll. She constitutes a kind of sentimental Agnes, whom every thing astonishes and enchants, although it appears to her that adventures are somewhat tardy in occuring. Her first visit at Paris is to Madame Le Roy, a celebrated mantua-maker in 1817. Adorned with a bonnet

and gown in the Parisian fashion, she considers herself invested with a talisman for conquering all descriptions of hearts. At our opera she discovers that our lyrical singers are mere squallers, and conspirators against the laws of harmony; which is a tolerable decisive judgment for a little simpleton in her own country. This nursling of a poet, who has so well described the seductions of Mokanna's gardens, could not remain insensible to the enchantments of our Parisian *Bayaderes;* Bigotini, Fanny Bias, &c. are proclaimed divine. She does not less admire the *chaste Susanna* of the *Port Saint Martin;* but it is at Beaujon that she herself is destined to triumph, in the supposition, that she has taken her seat in the same car as the king of Prussia, who was then at Paris under the name of Count de Ruppin. This gallant cavalier, however, turns out to be no more than a mere Colonel; but he is amiable; he wears mustachios; he talks of Austerlitz; he is a Buonapartist; in short, he is a hero. Miss Biddy enjoys some agreeable excursions with her hero to Tortoni, to Pere La Chaise, and finally to Montmorenci, where he becomes enthusiastic on the subject of Jean Jacques. Biddy imagines herself to be the Venus of this Mars in epaulettes. Alas! what vanity is there in mortal wishes! His courage, his wealth, his rank, and his wit, all vanish in a moment, when chance brings him to the eye of poor Biddy, standing behind the ignoble rampart of a counter, with a linen-draper's yard in his hand. In short, he is a man-milliner.

Mr. Fudge's son is more happy in his devotions; he feels no passions but for the delights of gastronomy; he assiduously frequents Very and Beauvilliers, and escapes cheaply with a few indigestions. In other respects he belongs to the dandy genus, and is described by his sister in the following terms:—

"A being with little mustachios, and stays, of diminutive height, resembling an hour-glass, with his head immoveably buried between two points of his cravat collar," &c. Mr. Fudge, jun. has a tutor; the latter is a poor cousin, the philosopher of the family, one Phelim Connor, who seriously indites liberal diatribes against the Bourbons and the Holy Alliance, while he lauds the sublime flight of the imperial eagle. There is no avoiding a smile at so much credulity; as if, forsooth, the thunder-bearing bird, again conveyed on the wings of victory, had permitted itself to be heralded by a republican red-cap. Some of Phelim Conner's tirades possess a lofty eloquence; they exhibit the impulse of real indignation. But I quit this somewhat disaffected subject, although I am writing in London, where our illustrious ambassador has just been quarrelling with the newspapers, because he disapproved a public invitation which they contained to assassinate his most christian majesty.

I must also relinquish the subject of Mr. Thomas Moore for the present, for I have not referred to all his works.

P. S. A new production of the author of *Lalla*

Rookh, namely, the *Loves of the Angels*, has just reached me.

Since this poem deserves a comparison with Lord Byron's *Heaven and Earth*, I have subjoined what I propose saying of it in my *essay on the genius and character of the noble author*.

The two poets have stamped the peculiar impress of their talent on their several works.

Moore has lost nothing of his exquisite sensibility, his felicity of description, and his elegance. His style is always a little too brilliantly polished; he sins through an entirely oriental luxuriousness of fancy. His muse is crowned with pearls and diamonds. She is rendered dazzling with rich ornaments; and when becoming more chaste and tender she charms us by more simple graces and less far-fetched ornaments, some relics of the coquette are still detected in the art with which she arranges her veil, and the simplest flowers which go to decorate her vesture. The creations of T. Moore are too much spiritualized; his females would be more interesting if they were less angelic. The fable of the poem consists in the narrative which three exiles from heaven mutually supply of their *bonnes fortunes*, with three daughters of earth.* The whole three have sacrificed every thing to love; but the angels of Lord Byron embrace perdition through a sentiment of honour. They generously prefer renounc-

* The poet himself speaks in the name of the third.

ing the pardon which is offered to them to the abandonment of the mortal females* whom they have seduced. But this love of the sons of God, and the daughters of men, is only an episode in the more severe composition of Lord Byron. The poet has delineated the picture of a world, corrupted and condemned to the terrible regeneration of a deluge. He describes man, invested with all his irregular passions, confronting the Creator, armed with inexorable vengeance. The same vengeance is about to overtake the superior intelligencies, who have forgotten their high vocations in the lap of terrestrial pleasures, and the devoted fair ones, who prefer to a jealous God the lovers whom they have selected, and whom they have made their only divinities.

Weakness abandons itself up to cowardly repinings. Impious pride, instead of offering homage to the Almighty, perishes with a curse upon its lips. The just man, strong in his faith, and the consolations of holy hope, resigns himself to his fate, and blesses heaven. A mother,—ah! the delirium of her maternal grief will doubtless plead for pardon — a mother, having vainly implored the safety of her son, suffers a reproach instead of a prayer to escape her lips at the near prospect

* Some rabbins have affirmed that the loves of the angels with the daughters of men is a false tradition, arising from a misrepresented passage of Genesis. The giants recorded to have been born of this commerce between heaven and earth, could not, in that case, have existed. However this may be, poets are fully entitled to avail themselves of the idea, whether allegorical or not.

of that death which is about to overwhelm them both. Meanwhile, one of the elect of God is destined by eternal mercy to re-people another universe. Should we blame the poet for having almost made a rebel of one of the sons of Noah? Did not evil carry with it its seeds into the ark, since the posterity of Adam after the lapse of ages required the sacrifice of divine blood for a second regeneration? Japhet, who is deluded by a guilty love for a daughter of Cain, appears himself to appertain to the race of the fratricide, whose pride had already revolted against the Almighty, previous to the destruction of his brother. Japhet is a dissatisfied philosopher, who daringly attempts to fathom the ways of Providence. Had it not pronounced to the billows, when fixing their primordial limits, "thus far shall ye go, and no farther?" When the ocean is about to engulph its prey, Japhet nearly proceeds to the extent of accusing the Almighty of injustice, contradiction, and cruelty.

The audacious genius of the author of *Cain* is discoverable throughout this drama, which in form and style recalls to mind the *Samson Agonistes* of Milton.

LETTER XLIX.

To M. P. Blain.

In referring to the English landscape writers, I have not perhaps sufficiently foreseen that the execution of their pictures would be criticised in France as imperfect and even coarse, on account of the negligence of the details, which the English artists dash over with the brush, instead of, like ours, labouring all the parts of the work with an equally minute attention. At fifteen paces distance the landscapes of Constable, Calcott, &c. &c. are admirable; but upon a nearer approach, they sometimes resemble mere rough draughts. I am not perfectly aware at how many paces distance the pictures of Claude, Watteau, &c. are *chef d'œuvres*. But have not all pictures a certain given distance, beyond which the illusion vanishes? I should find it a more difficult task to excuse the same defects of inaccuracy and negligence, of which it is demonstrated that the modern English poets are all guilty to a degree, which removes them more or less to a distance from the severe versification of the reign of Anne. Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Southey, Coleridge, &c. &c.

frequently, and with impunity, defy measure and even grammar in their verses. All these poems contain sublime pages; but none completely satisfy the claims of prosody and syntax, from beginning to end, like Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, or Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. They sometimes appear to be unfinished sketches, or brilliant improvisations, which the poet would seem to have never re-perused since the stenographist had taken possession of them. Two single poetical exceptions have alone remained faithful to the laws of the elaborate style of the last century; Rogers and Campbell. The first is remarkable for little besides the sustained eloquence of his polished and re-polished verses. Campbell, who has, like him, never passed over a page without obeying the Boileau—

"En reprenant vingt fois le rabot et la lime,"

is not contented with the merit of euphony and of correction. That elaborate care which his rivals despise as a mechanical labour, and which often leave an air of constraint or affectation attached to his works, have not however suppressed his enthusiasm, and the audacity of some of his inspirations. He belongs not only to the didactic school of Goldsmith, but he is perhaps the first lyrical poet of our days.

It may be objected that Mr. Rogers appertains as much to the school of Rosa Matilda, as to that of Goldsmith. His little poem of *Jacqueline*, and especially his lines upon a *Tear*, at all events betray a factitious and far-fetched sensibility.

Jacqueline is the daughter of a chevalier de St. Louis, in the *department of the Bas Alpes.* She leaves her father for a lover, who suddenly returns with her, to implore a readily granted paternal benediction. This slight frame-work is fitted up with some tolerably graceful descriptions; but all that might have been dramatic fails of effect, because all is throughout expressed in elegiac circumlocutions. It may be added that *Jacqueline* is found published in the same volume with the first anonymous edition of *Lara*, a poem in which Byron has so vigorously sketched one of those exaggerated but real characters, whose sombre and solitary greatness leaves so deep an impression on the mind. The verses on a Tear merit examination.

Mr. Rogers calls the *Eye of Chloe* a coral cell, a *spring of sensibility;* the *Tear* is a little *brilliant,* &c.;—these denominations may, it is true, be poetical in English. But the following reflection is ridiculously far-fetched. "The same law which models a tear, and causes it to fall from its source, is that which preserves its spherical form to the earth, and guides the planets in their course." I have sometimes seen, like Mr. Rogers, a tear fall from the eyes of a *Chloe;* but I never thought of making it a subject of an illustration of the laws of gravity.

This strophe would have done honour to the philosopher, who discovered the system of the world in the fall of an apple; but Newton was not a poet, and died a bachelor at the age of 80.

I more especially advert to these verses of Mr. Rogers, in order to remark that in the famous article of the *Edinburgh Review*, which proclaimed to young Byron, that he would never become a poet, he is reproached with certain verses on a *Tear*, mediocre, in the first place on their own account, (which is true enough,) but still more mediocre, says the critic, when compared with the exquisite lines of S. Rogers.

> "That very law which moulds a tear
> And bids it trickle from its source,
> That law preserves the earth a sphere,
> And guides the planets in their course."

Mr. Rogers has been the spoiled child of the reviews; one of his lucky circumstances was the being favourably quoted in the first satire of Byron. Thence resulted a great bond of sympathy between the young eagle of the new school, and the Nestor of the English poets, as Byron calls him; hence their mutual dedications in the complimentary style. Mr. Rogers also enjoys a great popularity in the drawing room; he is a rich banker; an agreeable Amphitryon; he may be said to be exactly adapted for giving dinners to our Parisian academy, and more especially for becoming one of its members. Let me hasten to add, that Mr. Rogers possesses other literary titles than *Jacqueline* and the *Tear*. The *Pleasures of Memory* and *Human Life* are excellent didactic poems, worthy of Goldsmith: his *Italy* is a series of pictures and episodes, replete with animation,

&c. I shall pass over his *Christopher Columbus*, a poor essay, which our academicans would call *romantique*; it is composed of fragments united by explanatory titles, in which there are more points than verses, and in which the summary is more extended than the poem. But how is it possible to deny the harmony of the philosophical poem, the *Pleasures of Memory?* All its details are select, delicate, and ingenious; the whole is full of agreeable reverie, like the sound of distant music, and such is also the impression generally produced by a reversion of the mind to the subject. The poet has especially defined, with great felicity of effect, the association of material objects with memory, of those objects which "whisper of the past," a happy expression, which is incapable of being translated.

The opening which introduces us into the midst of a rural landscape, prepares us in the first instance for the tender emotions of which the poem is the source. The allusions sometimes seem to be short and abrupt; those, for instance, which, when explained in a note, interest us more than as they stand in the text: but there occurred the danger of multiplying episodes, and losing sight of the original conception of the poem.

The plan of *Human Life* is less successful, because it embraces every thing, and necessarily remains incomplete.

"Chaque age a son esprit, ses plaisirs et ses mœurs."

Human Life is an imperfect developement of

these verses of Boileau; but it is less a series of descriptions, than of moral reflections on the unforeseen revolutions which occur in the human mind, in accordance with the progress of the age, and the course of the events of life. Entirely contemplative, without local description, and without individual characters, the poem abounds in common places, to which the polish of the style is not always capable of imparting attraction.

One of the most frequently quoted passages is, the beautiful description of the mother embracing and suckling her first-born son. Several graceful images of the same description follow, expressed with elegance and purity; but there is nothing striking, and nothing newer than the verse, wherein the poet has translated the charming line of Virgil—

"*Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem.*"

This picture of the infant in its cradle, and of the tender admonition of the mother, has inspired the sombre genius of Byron with an idea worthy of Albano, or Raphael; that in which Adam speaks to Cain, while showing him the little Enoch on the point of waking. *Cain, Act the 2nd.* Campbell in the *Pleasures of Hope* has also placed an unhappy mother near the cradle of her sleeping son; the sight of whom inspires the song of melancholy tenderness,

"Sleep, image of thy father, &c."

And to this picture, Campbell adds that of the first lessons of the mother, which has furnished Westall with the subject of that graceful vignette, in which the child on its knees, with its little hands joined, is learning to lisp its prayers.

Rogers has been more successfully inspired in the description of the marriage festival, and some rural or domestic scenes which contrast with those in Crabbe; for Rogers, who bears the reputation of great skill in writing an anonymous epigram, does not permit himself the indulgence of the slightest satirical expression in his poems.

The *Pleasures of Hope* is a didactic poem, like the *Pleasures of Memory;* but the future lyrical poet is detected there, in the vagueness of the plot, the greater licence of the transitions, and a more frequent boldness of thought and image; in a more rapid march of the style, and especially in its eloquent apostrophes, like those to Kosciusko and Liberty, which terminate the first canto. Compared with Rogers's poem, that of Campbell satisfies the judgment less; notwithstanding it has some more striking passages, it leaves fewer impressions on the mind; the poet stands in need of all the brilliancy of his style to give us satisfaction. This arises from the defectiveness of the subject; for the *Pleasures of Memory* may be sketched within the limits of a poem, but what limits can be set to those of hope? which not only embrace terrestrial things, but quit their limits, create new worlds, new divinities, and paradise, &c. &c.

Campbell's poem more effectually evades analysis than that of Rogers.

Campbell for several years seemed to content himself with the success of his first poem; some short lyrical compositions alone appeared at long intervals, to re-awaken the attention which the *Pleasures of Hope* had excited: a larger work of the author's had been long promised in the bookseller's advertisements, when *Gertrude of Wyoming*, an episode of the revolutions of Pennsylvania, made its appearance. The versification and the details of this poem, demonstrated that the talent of Mr. Campbell had matured itself; but if the fable be analyzed, one is tempted to infer, that everything has been sacrificed to a desire of disarming criticism by the unremitted elegance of the style, which possesses all the harmony peculiar to that of Goldsmith, and the vigour of Johnson, joined to that brilliancy which recalls the imaginative splendour of Spencer. The action is as much neglected as the style is polished; each idea is complete, but appears isolated; a defect rendered more obvious by the rhyme of the stanza of nine lines which the poet has adopted; it might be called a long series of sonnets. This construction is also the same which Byron has chosen for his *Childe Harold*, but in *Childe Harold*, there is no unity of action, all is descriptive. *Gertrude* is an almost pastoral subject, which perhaps required more ease and simplicity. Such, however, as it is, Campbell's poem exhibits admirable contrasts. The grand scenes of

American landscape are happily contrasted with the patriarchal life of the colonists; the majestic sketch of old Oneyda, and his savage eloquence, are in harmony with the mountains, the ancient forests, and the lakes of his native soil. He is worthy of taking his place by the side of Chactas. His character is less developed than that of Atala's lover; but his physiognomy possesses something more frank and local, because, like Chactas, he has not been half civilized by contact with the inhabitants of Europe. The infancy and love of Waldgrave and Gertrude unfavourably recal the exquisite groupe of *Paul and Virginia*; but Campbell has made no more than a sketch of that which composes so dramatic a picture in Bernardin de St. Pierre. Let us forget, for Campbell's sake, comparisons of this kind. The merit of the rhythm remains his own; for the English, especially, are incapable of comprehending to what a degree St. Pierre and Chateaubriand are poets in prose.

Wyoming, where Campbell has laid the scene of his poem, is a village, on the banks of the Susquehanna, which was ravaged and burnt in 1778, by the Indians of the anti-republican party. The poet has been reproached with his choice of a subject, which is naturally calculated to wound the national pride; but this imputation has not been more fatal to him than that which some critics amongst us have addressed to the author of the *Vespres Siciliennes*. The *Messenniennes of Casimir Delavigne*, and the Ode on the *Battle of Hohen-*

linden, by Campbell, had previously demonstrated that both poets were admirers of national glory.

I will endeavour to analyze *Gertrude* by the aid of an occasional introduction of Campbell's verses.

His opening, which describes the locality of the scene, has all the charm of the invocation in the *Deserted Village*: but the style of Campbell is more original than that of Goldsmith, because it is imbued with those local colours which have contributed to the success of the *Paul and Virginia* and *Atala*.

War was unheard of, except in the conversations of the European colonists, who peopled this fortunate canton; the poet describes the various physiognomies of this family of emigrants, German, Spanish, Scotch, &c. Gertrude's father is an Englishman named Albert, the magistrate of the colony, who is occupied with his patriarchal administration, and the education of his daughter. One fine summer's morning, the father and daughter observe a canoe stopping on the adjacent shore; an Indian advances towards Albert's dwelling; red plumes wave over his dark brown forehead, and bracelets glitter on his arms, to which a little Christian child clings, while conducted by his guide,

"Led by his dusky guide, as morning follows night."

A line very much admired in England. The child appears extremely pensive for his age; while, leaning on his unstrung bow, and placing one hand on the head of the boy, the warlike

Oneyda narrates how he saved him, the only individual who remained alive from the massacre of a garrison surprised by a hostile tribe. A dying mother confided the charge to his protecting arm, entreating him, at the same time, to consign him to the hands of Albert, with a ring, which causes his recognition as the son of Julia Waldegrave, and of a dear friend of Gertrude's father. Sincerely affected, Albert deplores the misfortunes of those he once loved, and adopts the poor orphan, while the Indian contemplates his emotions with a characteristic tranquillity, the contrast of which produces a great effect. But he is not destitute of feeling for the misfortune of others, and after throwing his wolf's skin over his shoulders and lacing his mocassins*, he addresses a farewell chaunt to the child while sleeping on the bed of Albert.

"Dors, enfant, repose tes membres fatigués, et si dans le pays de songes, tu rencontres ta mere, dis a son esprit que la main de l'homme blanc a arraché de tes pieds l'epine de la douleur. Moi, de retourne au desert, ou je retrouverai l'empreinte de tes pas, et cette fontaine ou il m'etait si doux de te nourrir du gibier tué de mes fleches, et de te desalterer avec la rosée du lotus.† Adieu! tendre rejeton, des lieux ou le soleil se

* Indian leggings, like high gaiters.

† Quelquefois, j'avais chercher par mi les roseaux une plante dont la fleur allongée en cornet contenait une verre de la plus pure rosée. Nous benissions la providence, qui sur la faible tige d'une fleur, avait placé cette source limpide au milieu des marais, &c.—*Atala.*

leve. Mais si les orages de l'affliction fletrissaient ta fleur, alors reviens a moi, oh mon fils adoptif, et je te grefferai sur un noble tige; le crocodile et le coudor serveront de but a tes traits, pendant tes loisirs et dans le choc des combats, je t'apprendrai a venger ton père dans le sang des Hurons pour rejouir son âme dans la region des astres."

Oneyda then departs, and the first canto concludes. Here the poet permits himself a rather capricious licence. "Belier mon ami, commence par le commencement," said the giant Moulineau, in Hamilton's tales; but it is into the midst of his tale that Mr. Campbell now takes a sudden leap. The imagination of the reader is required to divine, that, during the interval between the first and second cantos, Henry Waldegrave has gone to see his family in England, made the tour of the world, and discovered, that of all the countries he has seen, none have been able to make him forget that which was the witness of his boyish affection for Gertrude. The second canto only contains one scene. It occurs in a delicious valley, the description of which is enchanting, like the illusion of those dreams which transport the soul to fairy land. Gertrude embellishes this spot with her presence, and the influence of the scenery itself, on the mind of Gertrude, is depicted with charming delicacy of touch. It may be conceived that Campbell's heroine has become an enthusiast of the woods. The ear is positively seduced by the harmony of the lines which paint the harmony of this solitude, where all is silent, except that, at

intervals, " le vacage fremit d'un foible murmure semblable a la premiere note d'un orgue le long des ailes d'une cathedral gothique. A peine si un y eut entendre un soupir de la colombe ou le vol d'un de ces colibris enchantés semblable aux jets lumineux d'un arc-en-ciel."

It is there, however, that Gertrude, smiling and weeping by turns, over a volume of Shakspeare, is surprised by the appearance of an unknown, who inquires for the residence of Albert, and Albert questions him about Henry Waldegrave, whose history he commences to relate. The traveller hides his face, but he has not been able to hide a smile and a tear, and Gertrude, with emotion, recognizes that it is Henry who has been relating Henry's tale. The joy of Albert breaks out in his language; but Gertrude, in mute silence, sinks on the bosom of her father, and Henry's arms embrace at once both sire and daughter.

Henry marries his beloved, and never had Hymen more extatic joys—

" A paradise of hearts more sacred,"

a line which recalls that of Milton—

" Emparadised in one-another's arms."

The picture of the happiness of the married couple, in the third and fourth canto, in a still greater degree recal to mind the joys of Eden,

and the beautiful poetry of the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*. The transition from these scenes of happiness to the tragical catastrophe of the poem, conveys a philosophical commentary, replete with melancholy and dignity, on the vanity of human pleasures. The war of independence is declared; afflicting presentiments precede the alarm of real danger; Oneyda re-appears upon the stage, though scarcely recognizable, on account of his age, and the labours which have whitened his hair and enfeebled his robust frame. Massacre and conflagration follow his footsteps. The local militia are assembled; the sound of warlike music re-kindles all the enthusiasm of the old savage chief. He sings his war song, beating time with his club; but shortly after Albert is struck by an arrow, and expires, and the pathetic scene of Waldegrave's despair succeeds the description of the battle! The hurried ceremony of the funeral rites exhibits a not less afflicting spectacle.

Moved by the funeral music, and by the last sad pomp, all the spectators melt in tears.

" — Et moi aussi je pleurerais, s'écrie enfin Oneyda, commençant tout à coup le chant énergique et sauvage de son deuil: je pleurerais, s'il m'était permis de souiller par des accens de douleur le chant du fils de mon père, ou si je pouvais fléchir ma tête sous le désespoir. Par les outrages que j'ai subis et par mon courroux, je sens que demain le souffle d'Areouski, qui embrase le ciel du feu des tempêtes, nous précipitera sur les en-

nemis, et nous partagerons, alors ô mon fils chrétien, le sang des vaincus et la joie de la vengeance.

" Mais toi, jeune plante, que le souffle plus doux des génies d'un autre climat a fait naître, les esprits du ciel des hommes blancs ne te défendent pas de gémir ; ni l'armée chrétienne, ni l'ombre de ton père ne s'affligeront de te voir, la veille du combat, dire, les yeux en pleurs, un lugubre adieu à celle qui t'avait tant aimée. Elle était ton arc-en-ciel, ton soleil, ton paradis, ta félicité . . . . . et tu l'as perdue.

" Demain vaincre, ou périr ! Mais quand la foudre du trépas sera lancée, ah ! où fuir avec toi, en quels lieux du monde, Outalissi et toi, porterez-vous vos pas errans ? Reprendrons-nous le chemin de cette belle demeure naguère si douce ? Elle est glacée le main qui en cueillait les fleurs ! l'horloge y sonne solitairement les heures ; la cendre des foyers est froide, et si nous y retournions, l'écho ne nous renverrait que le bruit de nos pas et des sons semblables à la voix des morts.

" Franchirons-nous ces montagnes bleues, dont les torrens désaltéraient jadis les nations de ma race, et où à mes côtés, mille guerriers saisissaient un arc vengeur ? Hélas ! dans ces lieux désolés le serpent du désert habite seul ; le gazon couvre les ossemens blanchis, et les pierres des tombeaux sont elles-mêmes minées comme moi par le temps. Oh ! ne pénétrons pas dans leur camp—où règne le silence du désespoir !

"—Mais écoutons, la trompette a retenti !—

Demain tu sécheras tes larmes, au milieu des feux de la gloire : l'ombre vénérable de mon père vient à moi de la région des ombres ; elle m'apparaît, portée sur les vapeurs qui roulent au-dessus de nos têtes : elle excite en mon âme la soif du combat. Elle m'ordonne d'essuyer la première, la dernière, la seule larme qui se soit jamais échappée du cœur d'Outalissi ; il ne m'est pas permis de souiller par des pleurs le chant de mort d'un chef Indien."

This lyrical song concludes *Gertrude of Wyoming:* it naturally leads me to refer to *Lochiel,* which is a prediction of the defeat of Culloden, by a mountain seer, and the ballad of *O'Connor's Daughter,* which " Rossignol Moore," unintentionally imitating some verses of M. Rogers, calls a tear of the Irish muse, crystallized by genius.

Alternately sparkling with grace and elegance, or nobly energetic, the minor poems of Campbell would alone be sufficient to establish his reputation, if he had not written *Gertrude.*

As a prose writer, he is not less brilliant, and has published a summary of English literature, replete with original ideas. His lectures on ancient literature, are distinguished by the same merit. In society, Mr. Campbell is an amiable man ; in politics, he passes for being, or having been, somewhat ministerial ;* but he has maintained the incognito while pleading for power ; and he is, there-

* This is a mistake.—*Translator.*

fore, a ministerialist, ashamed of his task, if he be so. In his poems he has advocated the cause of liberty, and still later, the cause of Grecian freedom.

P. S. The poem of *Theodoric*, which has just made its appearance, is less correct than *Gertrude* and the *Pleasures of Hope;* and the interest of it is of a less vivid description. Among the fugitive pieces which accompany *Theodoric*, there is one entitled "*The Last Man*," which bears great analogy to the "*Darkness*" of Byron. Mr. Campbell, himself, claims the having suggested the idea of "*Darkness*" to the noble poet. We have, in France, suffered a prose poem to fall into oblivion, which is also called *Le Dernier Homme*, by M. De Grainville, an extraordinary work, which has preceded the *Darkness* and the *Last Man* of Campbell.

"All worldly shapes shall melt in gloom,
The Sun himself must die,
Before this mortal shall assume
Its Immortality!
I saw a vision in my sleep,
That gave my spirit strength to sweep
Adown the gulph of Time!
I saw the last of human mould,
That shall Creation's death behold,
As Adam saw her prime!

"The Sun's eye had a sickly glare,
The Earth with age was wan,
The skeletons of nations were
Around that lonely man!
Some had expired in fight,—the brands
Still rusted in their bony hands;

In plague and famine some!
Earth's cities had no sound nor tread;
And ships were drifting with the dead
To shores where all was dumb!

"Yet, prophet-like, that lone one stood,
With dauntless words and high,
That shook the sere leaves from the wood
As if a storm pass'd by,
Saying, We are twins in death, proud Sun,
Thy face is cold, thy race is run,
'Tis Mercy bids thee go.
For thou ten thousand thousand years
Hast seen the tide of human tears,
That shall no longer flow.

"What though beneath thee man put forth
His pomp, his pride, his skill;
And arts that made fire, flood, and earth,
The vassals of his will;—
Yet mourn I not thy parted sway,
Thou dim discrowned king of day:
For all those trophied arts
And triumphs that beneath thee sprang,
Heal'd not a passion or a pang
Entail'd on human hearts.

"Go, let oblivion's curtain fall
Upon the stage of men,
Nor with thy rising beams recall
Life's tragedy again.
Its piteous pageants bring not back,
Nor waken flesh, upon the rack
Of pain anew to writhe;
Stretch'd in disease's shapes abhorr'd,
Or mown in battle by the sword,
Like grass beneath the scythe.

"Ev'n I am weary in yon skies
To watch thy fading fire;
Test of all sumless agonies,
Behold not me expire.

My lips that speak thy dirge of death—
Their rounded gasp and gurgling breath
To see thou shalt not boast.
The eclipse of Nature spreads my pall,—
The majesty of Darkness shall
Receive my parting ghost!

"This spirit shall return to Him
That gave its heavenly spark;
Yet think not, Sun, it shall be dim
When thou thyself art dark!
No! it shall live again, and shine
In bliss unknown to beams of thine,
By Him recall'd to breath,
Who captive led captivity,
Who robb'd the grave of victory,—
And took the sting from Death!

"Go, Sun, while mercy holds me up
On Nature's awful waste
To drink this last and bitter cup
Of grief that man shall taste—
Go, tell the night that hides thy face,
Thou saw'st the last of Adam's race,
On Earth's sepulchral clod,
The darkning universe defy
To quench his Immortality,
Or shake his trust in God!"

The "*Darkness*" of Lord Byron is a vision of despair; it is one of those pictures, which terrify even when reflected in the mirror of poetry. Nothing can be more terrific than the image of two enemies seated beside an expiring flame, the last flash of which reveals them to each other, and embitters their death with a feeling of hatred. But in Campbell's poem, how sublime is

that conception of immortality, which sustains the faith of the last man amidst the wreck of matter!

LETTER LXX.

TO M. CASIMIR DELAVIGNE.

Lord Byron and Sir W. Scott, are, at the present day, as well known and as much admired in France as in England. Never before did foreign poets exercise so great an influence over our literary dogmas, and over the inspirations of our youthful authors. But let it not be forgotten, if a revolution was finally effected in our taste, which had long been too exclusive and fastidious, that before Byron and Scott, the genius of Chateaubriand and De Staël had already powerfully excited the imagination of the French. We may discover in the writings of both, the poetry and the first examples of the new school. To me it appertains less than to any other person to be unaware of that entirely national influence.

Although Chateaubriand and Byron defend principles, opposite, in many points of view, there is this analogy between them, that the opposition

appears particularly favourable to their talent, which leans towards declamation and emphasis, like the eloquence of Burke. But that emphasis, which, moreover, is not continual, has nothing hollow in it, because it is most often with them nothing more than the picturesque and vivid expression of a great profusion of ideas, and of what I should call a natural and characteristic exaltation of mind; it is the *mens divinior*, the *non mortale sonans*.

The scepticism of Byron is a real anti-aristocratic opposition, at an epoch, when the upper class in England wished to proceed undisturbed, if not in vice, as Byron alleges, at least in the enjoyment of its privileges behind the shelter of its pretensions to morality and dignity. At the period when the *Genie de Christianisme* appeared, the Christian religion was also in the opposition; when, as a writer of the same poetical temperament says, "Le christianisme se releva des ruines sanglantes sous lesquelles il avoit paru enseveli, et manifesta par la voix d'un de ses plus eloquens interpretes quil etait la religion immortelle; alors reprirent leur ascendant ces sublimes theories religieuses auxquelles se rattachent toutes les hautes pensées, toutes les affections genereuses de l'homme, et de ce moment la poesie fut retrouveé," &c.

I have more than once thought, while sketching the most prominent features of contemporary English literature, how fortunate it would be for my work, if I were the first to reveal to France the energetic poetry of Byron, and the prolific inspira-

tions of Walter Scott. If we were now in 1819, these two geniuses would supply materials for half this volume; at present, I am tormented by the care of avoiding repetitions, so much have we already been occupied with Scott and Byron, and so often have I myself made them the subject of publication.

In order that I may quote myself as little as possible, I will try to re-ascend to the starting point of my first impressions. I shall say less, in this place, of Sir Walter, than of his noble rival in glory; but not without the prospect of often revoking the former on the stage of his dear Scotland, and, especially, of being animated by his presence, and the creations of his all-potent magic.

In 1815, for the first time, I heard the name of Byron pronounced; for the first time I read some of those brilliant descriptions of modern Greece, and of those emphatic appeals to the Hellenists, who then seemed deaf to the accents of his eloquent voice. It was in the climate of the south of France, where there is certainly something of oriental in the pure and balmy atmosphere; something, moreover, of the aspect of the Greek soil in the pompous ruins of antique architecture, its subverted cippas, its columns serving for landmarks, its most sacred vestiges converted to the vilest uses; and, finally, in its temples, which, like the Maison Carrée de Nismes, and the portico of the ancient theatre at Arles, vie with the temple of Theseus, and the marbles of the Parthenon.

It was an epoch of political re-action; when nothing was to be seen around but exaggeration and anarchy. Where was the Frenchman, young or old, unshaken by the general commotion? For my part, I readily confess, that the exalted poetry of Byron filled me with unaffected transport, because it was singularly in harmony with the atmosphere of disorder and passion in which I lived. Those accents of frightful energy, those images of sometimes exaggerated pomp, those repinings expressed with a tone of menace, those characters thirsting for all kinds of extremes, seemed no more than natural to my thoughts. Now that the tranquillity of the political world, and the weight of a few additional years have rendered me more *impartial*, that poetry still to my view does not seem forced, because exaggeration has not only become the general character of our epoch, but principally because, as I have just now said, it is the true expression of the impassioned soul of Byron. In the emphasis of such a man, there is neither pretence nor rhetoric. While explaining the motives of my enthusiasm, I believe I have not explained them for myself alone. Atala and René, were calculated to excite me at the conclusion of the great republican fermentation, as the *Giaour*, *Harold*, *Conrad*, and *Lara*, excited me after the last shock of the revolution and the counter-revolution in 1815.

By a singular coincidence, the individual who communicated to me the first writings of Lord Byron, was a mulatto physician *de la Trinité*, who, for a considerable time had attended the school at

Montpellier, after having taken his degree at Edinburgh. He was gifted with one of those strong organizations, one of those physiognomies to which the verses of the poet apply,

"Child of the sun; soul of fire."

Feeling himself doubly isolated by his origin and features, he experienced on a first introduction a degree of embarrassment. But if a frank deportment re-assured him, and he was invited to some discussion in the light of an equal, his temperament displayed itself; he talked like a superior, and the assumption did not misbecome him. He reminded me of Othello forgetting his African complexion, and feeling himself worthy to command at Venice, and to love Desdemona. He was more inclined to borrow his allusions from the somewhat oriental poetry of Byron, than any other, and one quotation led him to spout the greater part of a poem. When he quoted

"The cold in clime are coldin blood," &c.

Giaour.

it might readily be perceived that he also concealed "a soul of fire" in his bosom. If, in these poetical intercommunications, we were not alone, he grew impatient at being understood by no one but me; he wrote down the verses which he had declaimed, and I, with the lucky or unlucky facility, of which I have never lost the habit, translated them with

a pen as rapid as his own. These shreds of translation, strung together afterwards, have been published and reprinted five times; such a charm and energy does Byron retain beneath the veil of a version which imperfectly transmits the brilliant images of his poetry.

Many persons did not think of reading *Childe Harold, Conrad, Lara,* &c. till induced through the curiosity which the poet himself excited by the report of the adventures of his dissipated youth, of his numerous amours, his unhappy marriage, his voluntary exile, and all the eccentricities of his original character. As it happened, my admiration for the poet remained long independent of the interest subsequently imparted to myself, as well as every body else, by his individual identification with the character of his heroes. But whatever may be the source of the sympathy which Byron awakens, no one escapes its influence; his verses leave no reader indifferent. To whatsoever school they may appertain, they cannot avoid feeling the presence of

"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn."

The incidents of his tales interest us less than the almost metaphysical analysis of the soul of the hero, wrapped, as it is, in gloomy mystery, like a cloud. We pursue the windings of the mystery with extraordinary curiosity and emotion, a curiosity which fevers us like that which absorbs the whole thoughts of Caleb Williams in the *Castle of Falkland.* This it is which prevents the weariness we should feel from the always imperfect

development of the same individual character, which, in all the poems of Byron, only changes its title, costume, and situation. Much must also be assigned to the mastery of the style; which, notwithstanding its negligences, surpasses all known English poetry. These negligences, indeed, may be explained, since Byron, as is reported, never read a word of the verses which he poured out, with spontaneous inspiration, on paper. There are some of his poems which were *improvised* in three or four days. Hence, the defects of plot. In the way of *fragments*, Byron is not only the first poet of his country; but I know not where to look for his equal.

A pretence has been lately set up in England that Byron was becoming unfaithful to his own glory; and that his latter works are deficient in the vigour which characterised the first. But if you quote *Don Juan*, the conversation changes its tone, and loses its literary complexion. The big words of morality, religion, and chivalrous loyalty, compose the text of the discussion. Byron had been pardoned for passing for a *voluptuous misanthrope;* for a *sceptical* enthusiast; but he dared to betray the great secret of the English *moral* aristocracy, and denounce its mock dignity of character. From that moment he became a bad citizen and a fallen poet. It must be confessed, that *Don Juan* is cosmopolitan in every sense of the word; but it is also a poem which has given the lie to those who pretend that he has only one string to his lyre. What a variety of tones! what sublime and graceful descriptions! but especially what profound know-

ledge of the world! what dexterity in detecting the little springs of so many great actions, and so many great virtues! The demigods descend from their pedestal; it is sometimes, if objectors will have it so, the smile of a dæmon which discomposes their laughable gravity; but is it in the right or in the wrong? I have, undoubtedly, protested elsewhere against the abuse of talent, the three or four personalities, and the symptoms of bad taste, which stain some of the beautiful pages of the poem; but, like many others, I am hurried away by the mockery of a superior man, who has closely inspected those whose characters he depicts. There is, in *Don Juan*, a curious mixture of the satirical spirit of Voltaire, Fielding, and Sterne, with the most noble and exalted poetry. But one is naturally disposed to quarrel with the noble bard, when after having excited in us all the most terrible emotions of our nature, he concludes with bantering us for having believed him in earnest like ourselves. Let any one conceive the idea of Talma, stopping short in the expression of some mental grief, or tragic passion, in order to parody himself! But in the cantos succeeding the fifth, Lord Byron aims more at the sublime, and limits himself to the portraiture of men and things in their unsophisticated state. If he abandons himself to the impulse of susceptibility in favour of liberty, virtue, or any other honourable feeling, he no longer seeks to persuade us that it is feint and mockery; if he traces a chaste picture, he no longer spoils the effect by grotesque imagery; and if he assembles therein less noble figures, it is only

for the sake of obeying the eternal law of contrast and of truth. His facility of composition is inexhaustible. He passes

"Du grave au doux, du plaisant au severe;"

but without confounding the different species. His portraits are comic or ridiculous, because they are faithful, and no longer exhibit that burlesque exaggeration which is the constituent of caricature. What a painting is that of Suwarrow and his camp! What a terrific lecture on military glory, is the narrative of the siege of Ishmael! What a transition from the sultan's seraglio, to the court of Catherine! and finally, what a striking picture of the domestic interior of the English aristocracy! But here a cry has been raised, that Byron was never used to the good company of London. It must then be denied that the Prince Regent personally met him in such society, and made advances to him, with which the pride of the poet, it is true, was but little flattered; it must be denied that the entirely aristocratic Review of Gifford, stated in 1819, that before his exile, Byron was the idol of all circles; it must, in short, be denied, that the upper class of society is good company, which would be worse than confessing that it is not exempt from the vices with which Lord Byron charges it.

It is rather remarkable that this poet, who was aristocratical, by his own confession, in character and habit as well as birth, adopted in their most extreme consequences, all liberal ideas, and de-

clared actual war against the egotism of his own class, not only by denouncing the false dignity of their mode of life, but also in protesting against their vainglorious records of chivalrous epochs. While the noble bard designates the poetical manners of feudalism as mummery, another poet, whom his recent title of baronet proclaims to have issued from the popular ranks, has made himself the champion of the oligarchical principles of the day, and the enthusiastic chronicler of feudal traditions. To judge of him from his favourite studies, his style, and the selection of his subjects, Sir W. Scott seems more like a minstrel of the thirteenth than a poet of the nineteenth century. That attachment which he feels to a period, the traces of which are every day escaping, induces him sometimes to describe rather as an antiquary than a poet, even the dresses of his knights. But what life and motion are there in his pictures! what truth of character in personages! who appear in some sort to have descended alive from the old picture frames, in which, for centuries, their representatives have been covered with dust! Again, what animation in the narrative of a battle! The reader may fancy he sees the waving of the plumes, or hear the tramp of horses, the shock of the combatants, the cries of death or victory, and feel induced to take a part in the action, like Don Quixotte, on the stage of Genés Pasamonte. Are we to conclude from this that Walter Scott is no more than a servile adorer of feudal superstitions? No! he is a poet, and the elevation of his character is

proved by his impartiality in his romances. The poet of the Scottish times has given the finest part in *Peveril of the Peak* to a regicide.

If the anti-chivalrous Byron hurried, like a knight-errant, to carry the aid of his sword and fortune to the Greeks, Walter Scott, who has the duties of a citizen, a husband, and a father to fulfil in his own country, has subscribed 5,000*l.* in favour of the Greeks. This concurrence of the two great geniuses of contrary political opinions, cannot fail of being cordial to their hearts. In short, Byron's voice has just re-awakened dormant liberty at Thermopylæ. I transcribe, beneath, an imitation of one of his *Messenniennes*, which doubtless contributed to open the eyes of the Greeks to their own humiliation. The three latter strophes belong to me; the rest is almost literally translated from the third canto of *Don Juan*.

" Grèce, berceau des arts, quand ta gloire est flétrie,
L'étranger ne peut plus louer que ta beauté.
Ta beauté, don fatal ! Malheureuse patrie !
Qu'as-tu fait de ta liberté ?

La Muse qui peupla de nymphes tes bocages,
La lyre qui chantait les dieux et tes héros,
Charmant de leurs accords de plus heureux rivages,
Ne réveillent plus tes échos.

J'aime sur Marathon à voir lever l'aurore ;
Là le Perse connut quels étaient nos aïeux.—
J'ai rêvé quelquefois à l'aspect de ces lieux
Que la Grèce était libre encore.

Où sont-ils ces guerriers, la terreur des tyrans ?
Un barbare a brisé leur urne funéraire !
O Grèce ! le tombeau de tes nobles enfans
N'a pas conservé leur poussière.

Et nous ! d'indignes fers déshonorent nos bras :
' Esclaves !' ce nom seul est un cruel outrage !
Suffit-il de rougir ; et n'oserous-nous pas
Briser enfin notre esclavage ?

Terre, entr'ouvre ton sein ! de tes héros vengeurs,
Qu'un seul vienne aujourd'hui nous guider à la gloire ;
Qu'il fasse retentir ces mots chere à leurs cœurs,
Liberté, putrie et victoire !

Quelle voix du tombeau répond avec courroux :
—' Nous ne serons point sourds au cri de la vengeance !
Répétez-le, vivans ! Nous combattrons pour vous !'
— Les vivans gardent le silence.

Mais ils ont entendu le signal du plaisir ;
Voyez-les, se livrant aux transports d'une fête,
Lâchement étouffer l'importun souvenir
Qu'avait réveillé le poète.

Un groupe de beautés répète un chant d'amour !
Je sens des pleurs amers sillonner mon visage
En pensant que leur sein doit allaiter, un jour,
Des fils voués à l'esclavage !

Mer, reçois dans tes flots le poète mourant !
Ta voix couvre les sons de ma plainte affaiblie ;
Dans ma terre natale, au barbare asservie,
Je ne veux pas de monument !

— Sunium fut témoin de son heure derniere ;
Les convives joyeux revenus sur ces bords
Ne purent retrouver sans un secret remords
Son luth muet et solitaire.

Un musulman survient, son farouche mépris
Aux fils de Thémistocle a fait baisser la tête,
Et brisant sous leurs yeux la lyre du poète,
Il en foule aux pieds les débris.

LETTER LXXI.

TO M. F. DONNADIEU.

I RETURN to the subject of *Don Juan*, because of all the poems of Lord Byron it is that which stands most in need of apology; but the time will come, when in England itself it will be quoted as the most miraculous exemplification of his talent. Let Byron die to-morrow,* and private hostility, and offended self love, compelled to be silent through prudence, in the midst of general mourning, will no longer be enabled to sanction by their murmurs and treacherous insinuations, the moral pedantry of English cant. Some superior critic will dare to declare his opinion aloud, and each individual will repeat, "This is what I myself thought, but did not dare to express."

While seeming to despise the opinion of the multitude, it is to the good sense of the people that Byron has appealed in his Don Juan. He has offended all the coteries; but he will have in his favour the public which he has selected: the

* When I traced these words, I was in hopes that Byron would live many years, to the profit of his own glory and Greek liberty, of which his tomb has become, alas! the first monument.

poet was aware how much the sophisticated imitations of his *Childe Harold* threatened to compromise him; he therefore anticipated his caricaturists, and *Don Juan* readily slips into a parody of the *Pilgrimage*, because the combination of enthusiasm and sternness which it contains might be copied on occasion by some originals of English society, as a new variety of that disguise with which it indulges in arraying itself. The true Childe Harold was a sublimely contemplative spirit; he waged war against the tender affections, because he had suffered deeply through their means; but all that is grand, all that elevates, the wonders of nature and art, found in his heart an easily awakened sympathy. In front of the Alps, or the ocean, on the field of Waterloo, amidst the ruins of the Coliseum, or the chef d'œuvres of Florence, Childe Harold experienced and expressed an unaffected enthusiasm: and when a reversion to himself snatched from him some allusion to his domestic history, the egotism of the poet incorporated itself with all that was sublime around him. Chilled by the world, Childe Harold wrapped himself up in the folds of his pride, and in order to detach himself from men, whom he fancied he hated, he raised himself above them by indulging in emotions often eccentric but always sublime. A personage of this stamp becomes sovereignly ridiculous from the moment that he ceases to inspire that kind of mysterious admiration, the homage of which serves as a protection to genius, even in its errors.

Whether it was weariness of such a part, or fear

of wearying others, (for the little shafts of ridicule were able to irritate Napoleon through the folds of the imperial purple, and Byron in spite of the halo of his glory,) Childe Harold becomes a man of the world once more in Don Juan, and attacks, in order to avoid being compelled to defend. His object is to exert his superiority by the aid of irony; he mingles familiarly with the crowd, indulges his malice in quizzing the great, employs his own peculiar language in order to interest when relating some tragic event, and then suddenly, like Coriolanus, in the costume of the consular candidate, suffers his aristocratic disdain to transpire, and effaces by a pasquinade the emotion he has imparted. It must be confessed, that while playing this part of a humourist, he affects too much triteness; and when he protracts this tone, he falls into the extreme, which somewhat resembles that condition which Beaumarchais calls the intoxication of the people.* But by some unexpected transition Byron quickly returns to the charge against his own class, and with a dexterity of remark which sharpens the edge of his style. Occasionally, too, he grows irritated; attacks all the powers that be, and no longer confining himself to goading them in epigrams, he remorselessly lacerates the adversaries whom he has created. He no longer says to the masquerader, "You are

* "*C'est la bonne,*" some Figaro will perhaps exclaim: but Lord Byron does not excel in this imitation, and he assumes the character as awkwardly as the Count Almaviva.

so and so;" but violently tears off the mask and exhibits the man, disguised only by his native ugliness; thence the reciprocation of personalities.

It was to be feared that Byron would have brought Don Juan on the stage, at the age when Moliere has taken possession of the character. The hero would then have been a battered rake: and in three cantos the piece would have concluded. If Don Juan were the same hero, whom he had first in his eye, he has retained nothing of him but his name; his frame-work is of vast extent, and in order to fill it, it was requisite to lead Don Juan through all the incidents of different periods of life. He has taken him upon his emerging from childhood, in order to analyze his first sensations, and depict his first ideas in all their native simplicity. Accessible to all impressions, Juan is calculated to become all that circumstances and the lessons of society will make him; he alternately adopts all kinds of opinions and all kinds of errors; in love, deluded by his too easy heart, he is sincere even in his inconstancy. It is probable that Lord Byron imparts to the character much of what he himself experienced: but identifying himself less with Don Juan than Childe Harold, he in his own person, anticipates the period when, like himself, Juan will find nothing in life but disenchantment and regret. His digressions are generally entirely personal; but if he is prompted to discolor the future, he makes amends by occasional retrospects on the past, which restore him, through the re-action

memory, to all the freshness of his early imagination. Byron is also often under the immediate influence of the localities wherein he writes: Italy appears in many of his stanzas invested with all the warmth and purity of its atmosphere, the beauty of its scenery, and the tender melancholy of its ruins. Witness the apostrophe to the forest of Ravenna.* While thus abandoning himself to the caprice and impression of the moment, the poet naturally places himself in collision with himself. He is the first to admit it. After having been perhaps unjust towards the glory of the chivalrous Gaston De Foix, in his aversion to every thing connected with knight errantry, he is detected in the act of pitying Don Quixotte, and quarrels with Cervantes for having killed with ridicule the ancient honour of Spain.

All these caprices of generous susceptibility, all these vagaries of humour, gaiety, and buffoonery, admirably promote the effect of the picturesque style, which resembles in reference to the poet's thoughts, that of a transparent veil carelessly arranged. The style of *Don. Juan* is entirely Lord Byron's, and belongs to him alone. This style did not previously exist in the English tongue. Don Juan often deals in expressions and phrases which would be otherwise incorrect; in those natural epithets after the manner of our Fontaine, which are true conquests made from the regions of prose, but also true poetry, because they depict freely.

* Fourth Canto.

It has been said of Byron's style, generally, that it is a kind of improvisation. In *Childe Harold* it is the improvisation of enthusiasm; in *Don Juan*, it is that of the witty and familiar conversationist; of a man, who has seen and observed much, and felt and reflected much on the subject of himself and others. This anatomy of the human heart, and of its secret springs, produces no discoloured analyses in the hands of a truly great poet. The portraits which Byron traces are all living, and poetical in the midst of their fidelity. His females, especially, are the offspring of an enchanting poetical inspiration; such is his Haydee, such his young Aurora.

I must confess that one only circumstance would console me were Byron in Greece to omit the conclusion of his Don Juan. I could never forgive him for losing sight of the divine Aurora, as he has lost sight of Haydee.

Lord Byron has been reproached, as we have said, with being confined to the variation of one character by simple shades of difference. What an effectual reply to this reproach does the gallery of portraits in Don Juan offer! I repeat, that this biographical Odyssey only stands in need of the authority of some critic in order to be generally admired. Alas! the thought awakens a melancholy reflection on my hair, which, as Byron says of his own, is already turning grey!

"But now at thirty years my hair is grey.

* * * *

No more; no more; oh! never more on me,
The freshness of the heart can fall like dew."

Sad disenchantment of the illusions of youth. Eight years ago I still preferred the *Nouvelle Heloise* to *Gil Blas*; and I should not then have ranked *Don Juan* above the solemn and impassioned poetry of *Childe Harold*, the pathetic accents imparted to the *Lament of Tasso*, the tender melancholy of *Parisina*, and the terrific and afflicting mysteries of *Manfred*.*

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P. S. It is principally the alleged irreligion of Lord Byron, which has afflicted the true friends of his glory. I have endeavoured to *analyze* with impartiality the scepticism of the noble poet in the *Essai sur son charactere et son genie*. From all that has been revealed to us since his death on the subject of his moral opinions, I infer that there was in Byron at least a *great desire of belief*. As often as he beheld man between heaven and him, he sheltered himself in doubt, and by a singular caprice of pride affected an audacious disdain or a cold indifference of the belief in astrology; but in private with his friends, he did not fear confessing what he called his superstitious weakness, while he hastened to justify it by the example of the great men, who had been superstitious on that point, like himself. That vague and indecisive revelation of something written there, was, it is

* I interrupt here the course of my letter, in which I had embodied some details of the private life of Lord Byron. His death has given occasion to publications which have anticipated me; but I do not renounce the design of adverting to him again.

to be hoped, perfectly cleared up during the last moments of an individual dying for a sacred cause. It is known that Lord Byron always carried some precious memento concealed in his bosom, and suspended by a ribband. Captain Medwin supposes that it was the portrait of the lady who had been the first object of his love. A German Gazette has just been sent me, in which the learned M. Hammer pretends that it was an oriental amulet.*

Subjoined is an anecdote which would lead me to believe, that if Lord Byron had provided himself with an amulet, it might have been a scapulary, or some relic of the christian faith.

During his residence at Athens, in the Franciscan convent, Lord Byron had ingratiated himself with a monk, named Father Bernard. When Grecian liberty, replying to his magnanimous appeal, called on him to detach himself from the enjoyments of Italy, Byron, on making up his determination to depart, said one day to his friends—

"It is nevertheless very extraordinary; Father Bernard, in giving me the crucifix which he carried about him, told me with a prophetic air, 'You will become the defender of the christians; you will return into Greece for the sake of the

* "This amulet," says Mr. Hammer, "is a cypher on paper furnished by a dervise: it is the copy of an agreement between king Solomon and the devil, by which Satan undertakes to do no injury to whomsoever bears the writing, which contains five prayers of Adam, Noah, Job, Jonas, and Abraham."

faithful; but I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you again; I am fearful that you will not come as far as Athens.'" Lord Byron fell into a deep reverie, which no one dared to disturb, since those around him were accustomed to see him abstracting himself in this manner, when any serious or melancholy thought surprised him in the midst of a conversation. After a few moments he added these remarkable words:—"It will be hardly believed that I never would part with this cross under any circumstance; it is, however, the fact. I never would give it to my mother, nor my sister, who requested it of me on my return to England. It is a remembrance of the Franciscan prior, who lives in the tower of Diogenes, in Athens. The good monk was very partial to me; and when he heard that I was about to depart, he was much grieved. 'Your lordship must not forget me,' he said, when we parted. 'Select any thing you please from what I possess, in order that you may keep it as a remembrance of Father Bernard.' I laid my hand on the crucifix, which he carried about him, and asked him if he would give me that. The good father was so delighted with my choice, that tears came to his eyes. He was a man of perfect sincerity in his belief. I have never since parted with the crucifix. I will even avow, that once I was extremely uneasy, under the impression that I had lost it; I was prepossessed with an idea of its value. But, in fact, behold the prediction of Father Bernard

about to be realized; we must take our departure for Greece.*

LETTER LXXII.

TO M. AVENEL.

I HAVE observed that excuse was made for Lord Byron's gloomy misanthropy, and his excess of scepticism. He was young and unfortunate. "The fallen angel," said one of our great poets, "might one day recollect his divine origin, and resume his place in the choir of those spirits,"

"Que Dieu fit pour chanter, pour croire et pour aimer."

It is said that in his conversation, the noble lord affected to despise women: and he has not abstained from epigrams on them in his writings, even while personifying grace, tenderness and

* I find this anecdote in a curious work on the subject of Lord Byron, published in London, by M. Salvo, who adds that the crucifix was discovered in the noble poet's *port-feuille*, by the side of his bed. Prince Mavrocordato sent it to his executors, with his *Album* and other papers. It is now in the hands of Mr. Hobhouse.

I should add, for the honour of our literature, that if Byron was the first to preach a political crusade in favour of the Greeks, our poets have not deserted the same noble cause. The Hellenists themselves express gratitude to M. Viennet, who set the example among us by devoting the price of his poem of Parga to the relief of the first victims of the war at length declared by the oppressed against the oppressors.

gentle affection, in the characters of Medora, Zuleika, Ada, &c; but women pardon everything to those who love; and Byron will, consequently share their pardon with J. J. Rousseau, because both have greatly loved. Who will place any reliance on the absurd calumnies invented about the author of Manfred, by the petty spite of a few discarded mistresses? Lord Byron has also enacted the part of an oppositionist in his poetry. He is a disaffected Peer, it has been said; true, there are many other greater aristocrats than him, who belong to the opposition in Parliament. But Lord Byron aimed at the character of a theologian in *Cain;* this set all the theologians against him. The cry of heretic and *manichean* was raised: the author of *Cain* was declared the founder of the Satanic *School!* a designation, which in the 19th century, savours a little of fanaticism. The two principal disciples of the leader are Shelley and Hunt, supported in prose by the paradoxical Hazlitt. Leigh Hunt is himself the founder of another school, ridiculed in *Blackwood's Magazine* under the name of the *Cockney School.* There is much boldness in the political principles of Leigh Hunt; but his poetry is characterised by gentleness. A luxury of images in Moore's style may be discerned in it, and a degree of harmony unrestrained by rules and ordinary language: but above all an affected negligence. Mr. Hunt rhymes like a noble *bel esprit:* and thinks like a demagogue. His enthusiasm for nature has more the air of a pretence

than a real emotion; for his descriptions are neither pastoral nor unartificial. Hazlitt has greatly lauded his *Rimini* in the Edinburgh Review.* That sublime episode of Dante was a delicate thing to meddle with. Leigh Hunt has overlaid it with an abundance of voluptuous images, and with the pomp of his descriptions, the reader becomes impatient in the midst of the brilliant court, and the magnificent *fêtes* to which he is in the first instance conveyed; where the poet seems to revel to such a degree as to lose sight of his two lovers; one is accordingly prompted to skip the two first books in order to find Dante again in the 3rd, which is more dramatic, but which is spun out to a still greater length. In the English poet's narrative, the famous line

"Quel giorno piu non vi legemmo avante"

is divested of the chaste grace, and charm, which it possesses in the mouth of Dante's Francesca. If Hazlitt had been less intimate with Leigh Hunt, he would have perceived, when quoting this passage, that his friend had permitted that character of sensuality which is one of the distinguishing traits of his poetry to transpire. Dante excellently says

"La bocca mi bacio tutto tremante."

But Leigh Hunt adds; "sweet was that long

* Mr. Hazlitt has somewhere said that Leigh Hunt was born with the disposition of a lord. Leigh Hunt has written the dedication of a poem to Lord Byron commencing, "My dear Lord Byron."

kiss," and neglects the *quel giorno non vi legemmo mai*. The poem however was not written in a boudoir, but in a prison. The *Quarterly Review*, which has treated Hunt with obvious malevolence, could not abstain from pointing out this defect. The Francesca of *Rimini* is not worth Lord Byron's Parisina. Mr. Leigh Hunt has himself been very severe on his contemporaries in the text and notes of a poem entitled *The Banquet of Poets*; which sufficiently demonstrates that a rich imagination is not sufficient to constitute a poet of the first order.

Greater expectations might justly be formed of another Arcadian appertaining to the same school, I refer to John Keats, a poet more contemplative than Leigh Hunt,* more incorrect, and quite as diffuse. His friends affirm that he went and died in Italy of a broken heart, in consequence of a criticism in the *Quarterly Review*.† It was his aim to imbue the deities of the antient mythology with the metaphysical sentiments of modern passion. His Endymion and Lamia are replete with vivid strokes of painting.

Neither must I omit the elegance, (though tinctured with mannerism), the harmony, and gentle dreaminess of Proctor, who under the name of Barry Cornwall has published some

* Leigh Hunt's "Foliage" is neither better nor worse than his other poems; it possesses much vivid brilliancy, amplifications, but little originality.

† It would seem that Keats was affected at the same time with an extremely nervous egotism, and a tendency to consumption.

graceful imitations of Lord Byron and the Italian poets. There is, however, nothing *Satanic* in the dulcet breathings of his *Sicilian Story* and *Marcian Colonna;* they are composed of beautiful verses and rich paraphrases. Many of his fragments appositely figure in the Albums and poetical almanacks of England, a peculiar class of pleasing publications, embellished with valuable contributions in verse as well as engravings. The most original of all the members of the little Radical School of Pisa, is Shelley, or the *Snake* as Byron familiarly called him: Shelley was a devoted friend, of gentle manners, more amiable than Hunt; melancholy but not sullen; affectionate, and if he ever was, severe severe only to himself; sober as a brahmin, and yet when wielding the pen, resembling a young Titan in audacity; waging war, both in verse and prose, on heaven, and human institutions. While he was still at school, and at an age when the soul surrounded by natural impulses, attaches itself alternately to the most opposite illusions, and when there does not exist an error, which it is not liable to embrace or abandon for another, or for a truth, and that without hypocrisy, young Shelley had the misfortune to seek food for his reveries in the philosophical systems of Spinoza, Payne and Godwin. He became their convert, and from that moment consecrated his expanding reason and his poetical talent to the service of atheism. The consequence, it seems to me, has proved that a better feeling in reserve, secured his imagination

from the chilling influence which those desolating doctrines could not avoid exerting over his poetry.

Discontented with every thing as it stood, and dreaming of a perfectibility which he could scarcely define to himself, Shelley wished in the first instance to overthrow and destroy the social fabric, in the hope that some preserving Pharos might arise from the ruins. He did not seek atheism in religion and anarchy in empires as a final object, but solely as a means of regeneration. It was like desiring to burn a town, in order to rebuild it on a more regular plan, and embellish it with new temples, consecrated to new gods. Society treated Shelley as an enemy. The theologians of Oxford expelled him from the university, and his father from the paternal mansion. Becoming himself a father, he was deprived of his children by the chancellor, under sanction of the law against atheism.*

Shelley, seeing himself without asylum, and even without bread, sold his father his rights of inheritance for an annuity. After living a solitary life for some time in the country, he finally exiled himself to Italy, to which he had previously made one voyage. It was in Switzerland that he became acquainted with Lord Byron, and it was there, also, that at the foot of one of these sublime mountains, which appear to elevate man to a communication with heaven, he had the temerity

* This law is at once Spartan and ecclesiastical. But its consequences might be rendered cruel and terrible: by it man sits in judgment on his brother man.

to subscribe himself an *Atheist* in the *Album* of Mount Anvert.

It is surprising, after the details of such a life, and such principles, to find in the verses of this demagogue, this infidel, this atheist, a vein of poetry so contemplative and so mystic, so sweet a charm of tenderness and melancholy, and an expression at once so natural and so impassioned of the purest emotions. There are, certainly, declamatory passages by the side of others of great energy and animation; and there is an occasional obscurity in some of the visions of a spirit too deeply imbued with a feeling of disappointment, and with personal anxieties. Shelley appears, in short, like a kind of Manfred, or Faustus, who suffers the penalty of having aspired to gather the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. If, on the one hand, by reason of his hatred to all those barriers which religion and social institutions raise against the impatient independence of man, Shelley may be said to belong to the Satanic school, on the other, his early admiration of the lake poets, whom he visited and studied, has tinctured his style, and even his thoughts; and the natural beauties of rural scenery, or the simplicity of childhood, inspire him with the same enthusiasm as the wild dreams of his adventurous spirit. Shelley has depicted himself with more obvious delineation in his *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude.* Alastor is a young enthusiast, who has vainly sought in the works of the philosophers, and in foreign climates, the living impersonation of a *beau ideal* which

has no existence; and he dies despairingly, on finding that he has spent his life in a dream. The descriptive parts of this allegory occasionally exhibit an admirable vividness and richness.

The *Revolt of Islam* conveys us to the paradise of the Genius of Good; for Shelley, in renouncing the Christian's heaven, creates a new heaven and new deities for his otherwise latitudinarian philosophy. The souls of virtuous and illustrious men, reciprocally commemorate the sacrifices and the labours which have earned for them the crowns of the just. A young Greek and his beloved, record how, after having delivered their natal city from tyranny, fickle victory had suddenly replaced tyranny on the throne. The object of the poet is to prove that they have already been happy in their martyrdom, since it has given them the hope of leaving to more fortunate avengers the task of breaking the chains of slavery. In the midst of all the adventures of this pair of lovers, the recollection of their love originating in early childhood, inspires the poet with the conception of a delightful picture. Shelley himself was a mere boy, when he became a husband for the first time. He united himself by his second marriage with a daughter of the famous Godwin.

Nothing could be more pathetic than his species of eclogue, entitled *Rosalind and Helena*, especially the tale of Rosalind, if it were not spoiled by an affected design of the poet, to legitimatize an incestuous love between brother and sister, to condemn the marriage tie, as an institution

against nature, and to brand that privilege which law confers on the human will, of surviving itself by a legacy.

What does the abuse of a right prove against the goodness of a right? It is true, one sympathizes with Rosalind on the subject of the frightful persecution she endures from her old, and miserly, and wicked husband; one may blamelessly participate the terror and hatred which this person imparts to his wife and children; a hatred and terror, depicted in hues of gloomy energy; but the same institution which has united Rosalind to her tyrant, sanctions the chaste affection of a happier married couple, and protects them from the designs of the powerful of the earth, who are compelled to respect the domestic hearths of the humblest of their vassals.

Shelley was well versed in the literature of Germany and Spain; he was also a profound Greek scholar; the task of repairing the loss of Æschylus's *Prometheus Delivered*, was only fit for his genius or that of Lord Byron. Shelley's *Prometheus*, composed at Rome, is stamped with an antique character; but it is, nevertheless, an entirely modern allegory. His *Prometheus* resembles Milton's *Satan* more than the Greek *Prometheus*. This is enough to indicate who the *Jupiter* is that his Prometheus braves.

It was at Rome, also, that Shelley composed his tragedy of *Cenci*. In order to vie with all the horrors of Œdipus, and the family of Atreus,

Shelley, in this performance, had nothing to do but literally adhere to the traditional narrative.

Francisco Cenci, a rich Roman of the sixteenth century, passed his life in debauchery and all kinds of enormities; as often as justice, roused by the cry of a victim, bared the sword of punishment, he purchased impunity of Clement VIII. for 100,000 crowns. Enacting the part of executioner to his own family, he coolly conceived the design of incestuous commerce with his own daughter Beatrice. Beatrice and her mother-in-law conspire to get their common tyrant assassinated; two bravos whom they have hired, shrink from the task at the moment of performance; and Beatrice in despair, herself consummates the fearful sacrifice. Papal justice, less indulgent to the daughter than the father, condemns her to suffer the death decreed to parricide. Beatrice was as amiable as she was beautiful; and the contrast produces an eminently tragic heroine.

The reader trembles and pauses at the idea of justifying or condemning such an action committed under the impulse of such motives, but no poetry can diminish the feeling of disgust occasioned by the detail of Cenci's wickedness. An irresistible curiosity, notwithstanding, engages us in the development of those Italian characters of the sixteenth century, skilfully invested by Shelley with that superstition which combined with all their sensations. Thus Cenci, the father, dedicated within his palace walls, a chapel to St.

Thomas, and caused masses to be said for the repose of his soul; and in the same manner his wife and daughter are profoundly occupied, with the desire of making him confess before his assassination. I suppress the details; it is reported that the representation of the Eumenides of Euripides caused the abortion of the pregnant Athenian women who witnessed the representation.

Of all Shelley's poems, one only has been proscribed by the law courts; it is that, from supplying the notes to which, Byron defends himself while he eulogises the brilliancy of its colouring. *Queen Mab* is clandestinely sold, and it was not without difficulty that I was enabled to procure a copy. I have never felt much dread of the sophistries of an atheism which borrows its incorporation from poetry; such poetry, in itself, supplies a refutation of its most specious principles. The muse must have both a worship and a belief. Shelley calls his unknown God, *universal love*: he is the same as my own, since he invests him with attributes, without which, I am unable to conceive the being whom I adore. The notes of *Queen Mab* are more hostile to Christianity than the poem; but they are, after all, nothing more than quotations from the philosophism of the age of Louis XV. They might be taken for a little collection of notes, written by a student in law or medicine, of one year's standing, who, on quitting college, has culled from Voltaire and other anti-religious writers, five or six common-places, in order to act the part of a freethinker in society, till some

female wit, interesting herself for his youth, tell him in a whisper, that he is no more than a philosophical parrot; or, till he be induced to peruse the *Savoyard Vicar's creed*, and so read himself again into the possession of religious feeling.

The plot of *Queen Mab* is as follows:—A young female (Ianthe) is peaceably sleeping, while her lover (Henry) takes advantage of her sleep to admire her recumbent beauty. The Queen of the Fairies, who represents imagination, descends in her aërial car, and reveals to Ianthe the past, the present, and the future.

The soul of the mortal thus favoured by Titania, ascends the car of the latter, and with her traverses the immensity of worlds, in order to arrive at the palace of the Queen of Enchantment. The fairy conducts Ianthe to a rampart, whence they contemplate all the spheres of the universe, among which our earth appears reduced to the size of a scarcely visible speck.

The fairy describes the ruins of antient ages; the birth and fall of empires; she then reviews existing things, and the systems of human arrogance, attacking all creeds, turning all worships into vain mummeries, and converting all divinities into phantoms, which vanish at the touch of her wand, as the illusions of Amida's palace disappear before the radiance of Renaud's divine shield. Resorting to an eccentric fiction, the poet invokes the wandering Jew to appear, and once more curse the tyranny of that deity, to whom he formerly

denied his pity. This is introducing one phantom to fight against another. Nor is this contradiction the only one which leaves the reader in the dark, as to the precise drift of the poet's intentions. As soon as all the dreams of popular beliefs are disposed of, the fairy explains the nature of the future, destined to fill that immense void, which, divested of all belief, is sufficient to terrify human imagination. There will no longer exist an almighty Creator: but universal love will preside over creation. All the enjoyments of the golden age, Olympus, terrestrial paradise, and christian heaven, will then be the reward of virtue. But in what is this said virtue to consist? I suppose the poet by virtue means the condition of a man in a state of nature; that is to say, a new obscurity. But it is after all no more than a dream, which Ianthe may probably relate when she awakes.

Grand and sublime imagery, energetic sentiments, all the enthusiasm of mysticism, and some poetical declamation completes the essence of *Queen Mab*, the style of which is distinguished by brilliancy and harmony, but is more emphatic than precise. I shall not say what a mathematician said of the verses of Racine. "What does it all prove?" *Queen Mab* proves that Shelley was a poet betimes, and that he deserved the eulogium of Byron; and fortunately it proves nothing against any religion whatever. I say fortunately, for I am somewhat inclined to agree with the worthy Brahmin, who was so unhappy in discover-

ing that Brahma had enjoined him an *impossible* creed. In order to demonstrate to him that the Brahmins ate living creatures, like the Europeans, an Englishman brought an optical instrument from Europe, by the aid of which, the Indian beheld a number of animalcules moving and living in the vegetable diet on which he usually fed. "You are in the right," he said, to the Englishman; but after a few days, the latter beheld him returning pale and pensive, and requesting as a favor the loan of his precious microscope. The Englishman made him a present of it; and the Indian taking it, broke it to pieces against a stone. "Since that accursed crystal," said he, "has deprived me of the composure of my belief, I have been miserable; and I hope to prevent, by breaking it, its teaching so cruel a truth to my countrymen."

Alas! how many less serious illusions are there, the loss of which, during the course of our existence, supplies a source of bitter regret!

If in a work entitled a *Tour*, it were not time to interrupt this disquisition on poetry, in order to *travel* a little, I would devote this place to an analysis of some other contemporary poets, and in so doing, I should not omit enumerating some female authors, who are not blue-stockings like Lady Morgan. I hope to have an opportunity of making a few remarks on Mrs. Helen Williams, Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Opie, young Miss Landon, the "Delpine Gai," of London, &c. I would not indeed so soon abandon the subject of poetry,

if I could give an idea of the style of these agreeable poetesses by imitations, in the manner of the following specimen, for which I am indebted to the friendship of M. A. Soulie.

IMITATION OF CHARLOTTE SMITH.

(SONNET IV.)

Flambeau des nuits, astre plein de mysteries,
Dont la lumière est si douce au malheur,
Que j'aime a voir de ces bois solitaires
Tes feux tremblans percer la profondeur!

Quand tes rayons, a travers un nuage,
Astre charmant, descendent sur les mers,
Mon œil te suit, et de mes jours d'orage
Les longs ennuis me semblent moins amers.

Puet-être un jour, exempt d'inquiétudes,
L'homme, affranchi des liens du trépas,
Ira peupler tes belles solitudes,
Et ses malheurs ne l'y poursuivront pas.

Ah! s'il est vrai qu'en ce monde paisible
Les cœurs amis ne soient plus séparés,
Fuyons, mon âme! adieu, terre insensible!
Je vais revoir ceux que j'ai tant pleurés.

I have heard M. De la Martine repeatedly read these lines, composed before the *Meditations* were known, and was told that they were his, which I should have had some difficulty in believing. M. Soulie has been equally fortunate in translating *Gray's Elegy in a Country Church Yard.*

LETTER LXXIII.

TO M. A. D'HANTERIVE.

It is time to quit London; it is indeed so unfashionable to stay there, that persons *comme il faut*, who have neither country-house nor post chaise to convey them on a tour to the lakes, shut themselves up in their apartments, and order their servants to say that they have quitted town.

I think, however, I should have quitted London with real regret, had I not expected to revisit it on my return from Scotland. Capitals have this advantage for a stranger, that he may easily contrive to pass unnoticed in the crowd, and that in a thousand places, his money places him on a footing of equality with a third of the inhabitants, who are as much * *strangers* to it as himself.

Fewer public places are doubtless to be found in London, where for a trifling remuneration, or even gratuitously, the last comer succeeds to the rights of the first occupant: but three months residence in London, is nevertheless insufficient for the purpose of seeing and visiting every thing. I should have greatly felt the loss

* It will be remarked here that the French Language wants the word foreigner, (forain,) as a contrasted meaning to that of stranger (*etranger*.) An Englishman from the country is a *stranger* in London, a Frenchman is a *foreigner* there.

of those reading rooms, where it is so agreeable to be enabled in a little quarter of an hour, to place yourself *au courant* of all that interests Europe: had I not obtained admission to a club, where one may read from morning to night, books or journals, without interruption, except (according to the English custom, that of calls for *refreshments*. Fortunately for our vine growers, among the liquids comprehended under the latter designation, are the sparkling wines of Champagne, and the light nectar of Bourdeaux.

I have also attended the libraries and lecture rooms of institutions, where it is requisite to be contented with journals and books. Nor have I omitted to pay assiduous visits to the booksellers. To some of them I have so effectually paid my court, to the great advantage of my library, that among the letters of introduction I am about to carry with me to Edinburgh, there are fortunately two or three for their brethren in Scotland.*

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Behold me at York, still dripping with the effects of a heavy rain, which I had not reckoned among the number of agreeables which the dickey of a stage assembles. But is it a fitting moment to chuse for complaint, when one has one's feet outstretched before a grate loaded with blazing coal? My companion, however, appears to have an inclination to grumble at the

* I reserve till my return to London a few comments on these establishments, which are connected with literature and general education.

climate, and eulogizes the cushions of the inside place; hence arises a germ of jealousy between us: acquaintanceship once formed, the prefatory condescensions diminish: discussions arise; each individual dares to form an opinion of his own: and character frankly developes itself on every fresh occurrence. Charles F. combines with the manners of a man of fashion, a certain degree of English gravity. By no means a stranger to poetry, indeed, strewing his conversation with happy quotations, borrowed from the most impassioned of poets, Lord Byron, he sometimes gratuitously declares war on all that quits the limits of the substantial. After proving that he is not incapable of resorting to a graceful gaity, or of elevating himself to the region of sublime emotions, he will confine himself to the precinct of a rigid critic, or an anti-poetic logician. I at least foresee that such will be the part he will enact with respect to me; but far from entrenching myself behind my reserve, I shall give full swing to my momentary impressions, satisfied of having a corrective to my enthusiasm by my side, which will quickly recall me to the gravitating central point of truth. Hence proceed some moments of impatience, and some painful disappointments, after the indulgence of brilliant speculations: but the charm incessantly revives; the air-built castles rise again from their ruins; the landscape re-invests itself with its usual brilliancy of colour, and sometimes imagination triumphs so far as to persuade and convert philosophy.

Double in extent to the greatest of the other counties of England, that of York is bounded on the east by the German sea, on the north by the mouth of the Tee, on the south by the Humber, and on the west by high mountains, intersected by vallies; it is not less remarkable for the variety of its products than that of its localities. Each of its principal towns exhibits a peculiar species of industry. At Sheffield, in the midst of the vapours engendered by innumerable forges, steel acquires its finest temper, and obedient to the hand of the workman, invests itself with the elegant forms of a thousand useful instruments. What a contrast between the rich knives of Sheffield manufacture, and the rough blades which Gurth the Saxon carried in his girdle, under the name of the Sheffield Whittle! Between Sheffield and Doncaster, the oaks of Wentworth Park have probably comprised a portion of that forest wherein Sir Walter Scott places the Eumæus of Cedric, and his unmanageable flock. At that time the town of Leeds did not exist, and it has now obtained a substantial importance by its cloth manufactures, the wool for which is in a great measure supplied by the flocks pastured in the environs of York, which also afford pasture to the finest horses in England.

Hull is an exclusive maritime town, and its inhabitants were the first to send out whalers in 1598. Their trade places them in communication, not only with Greenland and the Baltic, but also with the United States, and the south of Europe,

while the internal canals make their port an *entrepôt* for the stuffs of Leeds and Manchester, and the steel wares of Sheffield and Birmingham; a competition which occasionally appears to threaten the prosperity of Liverpool. Hull beheld the first blood of the civil wars shed under its walls in 1642; but it is York which more especially recalls historical reminiscences; and while projecting a longer excursion into the county on my return, I do not intend to quit the noble capital where I now reside till I take the road for Scotland; nor shall I even now omit a survey of the antique ruins of Fountains Abbey, and Kirkstall, as well as the more modern architecture of the vast but cumbrous ancient castle of Howard.

York constitutes the point of union of three great districts, into which Yorkshire is divided, the East, West, and North Riding. Does not the word *Riding* imply the extent of ground which a horseman can traverse in a day? Antiquaries close your mouth, by apprizing you that *Riding* is an old Saxon word signifying *third*. Science is now-a-days very dogmatic; and we no longer live in such times as when the thoughtless Wamba* exercised the subtlety of his companion in the oddities of the Saxon and Norman idioms, without troubling himself about the ridicule of antiquaries.

* See the 1st Chap. of *Ivanhoe*, where the novelist enters on the stage after the manner of Shakspeare.

LETTER LXXIV.

TO MR. F. GILBERT, AT ARLES.

LIKE every waning metropolis, which sees more modern cities founded by industry and commerce, enlarging, embellishing, and peopling themselves out of its parent population, and succeeding to its former importance in the state, York has to seek the titles of barren illustration in the annals of history, or the vestiges of departed grandeur. A native, as I myself am, of a city which grounds its chief boast on the antiquity of its origin and the dusty pomp of its ruins, it is not without proportionate sympathy that I listen to the men of York, when they tell us: "You are in the antient Eboracum founded by the Romans. Compare the plan of our city with that of Rome, and you will be struck with the resemblance. At a mile and a half distance you perceive three hillocks, which have preserved the name of the Emperor Severus; that prince made York his chief residence; it was there he received the homage and tribute of all the royal courtiers of the Roman eagle; it was at York he died; and yon* three hills composed his tomb. One century later, York witnessed the death and apotheosis of an-

* It is probable, with deference to the good citizens of York, that these three hills are natural.

other emperor, Constantius Chloris. His son, Constantine the Great, was born within our walls of an English mother,* and it was there he assumed the purple. We possess near St. Mary's Abbey, the foundations of a temple of Bellona, and the remains of a tower, still called the Roman. In coming from London you entered by the gate called Mickle Gate Bar; † that also is a Roman portal."

I smiled to myself, while I recalled to mind how, in a similar manner, I had enacted the *cicerone* of the deserted streets of the ancient capital of the Gauls, to a stranger, whom I sought to interest by observing: "Yon is a Roman theatre; there a Roman column; that obelisk, whose apex has been alternately usurped by the sun of Louis XIV., the red cap of Jacobinism, and the eagle of Buonaparte, had for its first emblem, the eagle of Marius. Beyond is the chateau de la Trouille, erst inhabited by Constantine." And thus, the citizens of York, as well as of Arles, forgetting the present in the past, indulge themselves in the fancy that there still linger some drops of Roman blood in the pulses of their hearts. "Vanity of vanities," &c.

York, after all, is not rich in Roman vestiges; but York has been the capital of the kingdom of Northumberland. William of Normandy besieged it, and reduced it by famine in 1070. In 1160

* Helena.

† This gate in the middle ages was decorated with the heads of several political victims.—Shakspeare (Henry VI.) places the head of Richard, Duke of York, killed at the battle of Wakefield, among them.

one of the first English parliaments was held there; and all the superior courts of the kingdom held their sittings there for seven years, in the reign of Edward I. At that period, York constituted one of the five ports of the kingdom: but no doubt the river Ouse then ran in a deeper bed, or rather, perhaps, the Roman gallies, and the Saxon and Norman vessels, were little more than *lighters*, when compared to the floating citadels constructed at the present day in the Chatham and Portsmouth dock-yards. York has more especially figured in the civil wars of the red and white rose; and five miles from its walls, on the plain of Marston Moor, the first of those battles was fought by Charles I. which concluded in bringing that king to the block. It supplies the subject of one of the songs in *Rokeby*.

York is rather an ill built town, containing about 15,000 inhabitants; its modern edifices exhibit nothing worthy of remark; neither the Town Hall nor the theatre, nor the bridges over the Foss and Ouse. Its old castle, built by William the Conqueror, is now converted into the county prison. The poet Montgomery, under sentence for offences against the laws restricting the press, was twice confined there; and it was there he composed his two charming epistles, called the *Pleasures of Prison*, which remind one of Gresset's *Chartreuse*.

The York assizes are famous, and the Guildhall is a gothic palace, the architecture of which is not deficient in merit. The York races annually attract a great influx of wealth. A festival not less

dear to the Yorkshire people is also held every autumn in the cathedral: it is a grand concert, which consists of more than five hundred musicians. Who will deny, after this, that the English are a musical people? I presume, however, that these *maestri* and performers are not all graduated musical doctors of Oxford or Cambridge. The important part enacted by the city government in the midst of all these solemnities may be easily conceived. Under the above designation must be classed the mayor, who, like him of London, is entitled *Lord*, the *Recorder*, twelve aldermen, two sheriffs, seventy-two common councilmen, and twenty-four honorary sheriffs, composing the cabinet council of his lordship. This latter magistrate wears a rich scarlet mantle, and a chain of massive gold; all these insignia of authority are generally much respected by the people, and the individual invested with them is in the right to consider them as a constituent portion of his dignity.* The office of Lord Mayor of York is worth £840 *per annum;* but several aldermen have been known to accept the place, and voluntarily renounce the revenue. When such magistracies become the almost exclusive patrimony, as in France, of a few patrician families, they ought to be entirely gratuitous. But, among us, the emancipation, by some means or other, of our *maires* and commoners, from the tyranny of the prefects, is especially a

* I shall not quote Figaro's *mot* on the subject of the lawyer's robe, but without descending much lower, I have sometimes heard a head drummer of the Imperial Guard say, that when he was equipped in his gold-laced coat, his plume and cane, he felt inspired by the courage of six Cæsars.

desideratum. I have never heard here that the mayor of York, or his justices of the peace, were obliged to pay court to the Lord Lieutenant. If elected by the people, our mayors would consult in a greater degree the people's interests; and it is perhaps a contradiction to have given the French a charter, without first giving them constitutional habits, and a municipal administration in harmony with the representative frame of the government.

I shall not describe the abbey of St. Mary, or rather, its magnificent ruins, although I might justly compare them to those of Mont Major, that monastery of which, according to the inhabitants of Arles, Louis XIV. prevented the completion, through jealousy of its being a finer structure than the Louvre. The finest building in York is, decidedly, the cathedral, one of the wonders of Great Britain, and of *Gothic* architecture. The citizens of York wish to substitute *English* architecture for this phrase, alleging that the pointed arch was invented in England. The *Voyages Pittoresques* of Nodier and Taylor have settled this question, to which I have already referred. The first age of Christian architecture in England lasted from the conversion of the Saxons to the conquest of the Normans in 1066.

The architecture of that epoch was Saxon; the demi-circular arch was its characteristic trait. From 1066 to 1200 under Richard I. the architecture was Norman; the model of this appertained to France. From 1200 to 1300 the English archæologists maintain that the architecture of

their country assumed a character peculiar to itself; and they designate the monuments of this period, as monuments of *incipient English* architecture. From 1300 to 1460 that architecture was perfecting itself, and introducing ornaments; this constitutes the ornamented English style. At length, from Edward III. to Henry VIII., from 1460 to 1537, the churches appertain to the *florid English* style. York cathedral was half a century in building, commencing under Henry III. (1227) and completed under Edward I. (1291).

The imposing, and at the same time graceful mass of the edifice, surveyed at a distance, might be poetically compared to a vessel in full sail. The space which this temple covers, without cloisters and courts, is two acres. The temple of Diana at Ephesus covered only one. Compared with the Basilicons of the true God, the pagan temples were little better than chapels. Had the architects of Athens seen St. Peter's at Rome, they would have invented some mythological allegory, in order to explain the possibility of suspending a temple in the air. York cathedral, in its immense *ensemble*, exhibits all the elegance and chaste symmetry of those Greek monuments so much eulogized for the proportions of their details. What splendour and majesty in that *façade*, with its two lateral turrets, the ornaments of which are so delicate as to appear entirely perforated or transparent! * Let us enter the edifice.

* These turrets, by their projecting too much, injure the effect of the central tower, which appears heavy by the contrast.

This precinct of 524 feet in extent still farther surpasses expectation. The eye is never tired with admiring the pillars which compose, by the expansion of their capitals, the eight equal arches of the nave. The colours and figures of the stained glass are perfect. The five lancet windows of the north aisle are called the five sisters, since a tradition ascribes them to five young virgins, who endowed the church with them by means of a pious collection. The light transmitted through these brilliant paintings has something of a fantastic character. But the numerous sculptures of the lobby remind us that we are *approaching* the court; five statues of English kings, from William I. to Henry VI., adorn the niches; but these statues, which are coarse and mutilated by time, are not of successful workmanship. As to the interior of the choir, it surpasses description; the elaboration of the sculpture is here prodigious. The windows do not excite a less degree of admiration; and when on being shewn the largest, adorned with figures of the Virgin, as angelical as those of Raphael, the sexton tells you that it is the wonder of the world, you find yourself surprised into a concurrence with his opinion. I have paid four visits to this sumptuous and elegant choir; the last was of four hours' length, and occurred at the moment when the daily service commences. A small congregation was present; and the organ and voices of the choristers performed an anthem. I really fancied myself listening to a celestial concert. I do not exaggerate. I do not know which

most affected me, the solemn music of the organ, or the voices of some of the children, which were replete with ineffable purity and sweetness. I shed tears of emotion, and thinking of my mother, as I always do when I weep, whatever be the cause, I addressed a prayer to heaven for her, which I have no doubt will be heard.*

The sepulchral monuments are numerous in this edifice.

We visited the vestry, where the archbishop invests himself with his pontifical robes, and where are preserved the church registers. The sexton shewed us, as curiosities, three chalices, found in the tombs of three catholic archbishops, pastoral staves, a superb silver cross, surmounted with a figure of the Virgin holding the infant Jesus in her arms, and an antique goblet *(poculum charitatis)*, given by one of the pontiffs to the York corporation, and bearing the following inscription :— "Forty days' indulgence are granted by me to those who drink from this cup. Richard, Archbishop." The sexton shews you, as I have said, all these things as so many trophies torn from the grasp of papal superstition. To hear him talk of the idolatrous practices of the papists, one felt inclined to call upon him for an account of the ashes of these catholic prelates, which founded the won-

* My philosopher wept, I believe, like myself, and will not contradict my enthusiasm for York cathedral, and for the religious music I have referred to. The excellence of the organ has been cited; and I was told the name of the organist. The musician is called Dr. Camidge.

drous temple we had just been surveying. What great difference, indeed, is there between the worship of these idolaters and that of the heirs to their treasures and distinctions! A chair is also shewn in the vestry, of a curious shape, as old as the time of the heptarchy, and which has served for a throne to Saxon kings on the day of their coronation. This chair, a striking record of the vanity of worldly pride, is sometimes replaced in its pristine situation in the choir near the altar, when his grace the Archbishop of York, absenting himself for a few months from court and parliament, honours his diocese and cathedral with his gracious presence. The Lord Archbishop has himself a palace, ecclesiastical courtiers, and more than a million of revenue, resulting from tithes and other contributions. What had his *idolatrous* predecessors more?

The English church, it is true, has lost those donations which formerly enriched the chapters and the convents; and I am reminded of them by the horn of ivory which is seen among the other relics at York, and which is referred to as the horn of king Ulphus, in the letter from the author of *Ivanhoe* to Dr. Dryasdust.

Visitors should not omit seeing the chapter-house of the York cathedral; a building contiguous to the north aisle. It is an octagon of very beautiful sculpture, and adorned with forty-four stalls. The capitals of the columns exhibit variegated and eccentric forms, but producing great effect; and the stained glass windows are worthy

of their connection with those of the Basilicon. A mutilated* Virgin Mary attests the fanaticism of the presbyterian revolution, and shews the danger which the cathedral at that time incurred. The following monkish verse, traced on one of the walls, does not contain an exaggerated eulogium on this chapter house :—

"Ut rosa phlos phlorum, sic est doma ista domorum."

* In another work I shall employ the notes which I made on the madhouse, (called the *Retreat*), which is under the direction of the quakers.

LETTER LXXV.

TO MR. A. BRIAVOINE.

We have yet a few miles to travel, and we shall reach the country of Walter Scott.

The traveller has scarcely entered the county of Durham before he is made aware of his approximation to Scotland, by the harsher characteristics of the climate as well as the scenery. Durham is

* A Virgin Mary at Newstead Abbey, more fortunate than that of York, inspired Lord Byron with one of the most poetical stanzas of his *Don Juan*.

a county palatine, a real ecclesiastical principality. The bishop is a prince, not only by reason of his title, but of his immense wealth, his privileges, and his vast revenues.* He is perpetual judge within his domains. If he enters in person any court of justice there, no matter what, he has the right of presiding in it. As refers to the civil administration, he is lord-lieutenant of the province, and nominates the high sheriff. Nor am I clear that in circumstances of invasion, he might not be again found, like the pontiffs of the feudal times, substituting the helmet for the mitre, the cross for the lance, and bravely assaulting the infidel or the marauder. This supposition may be allowed me, for as I did not visit the interior apartments of his dwelling, which are said to be magnificent, and furnished in the modern style, I was compelled to limit my admiration to the *exterior*; that is to say, to the remains of fortifications, ramparts, and all such features as rather announce a citadel than a pacific palace: and it was the warlike hand of William the Conqueror that laid its first stone.† In turning my eyes towards the

* My friend, C. Nodier, has involuntarily launched a bitter epigram against the palatine bishop. "Durham," said he, "passe pour une des villes les plus pauvres de l'Angleterre. Nous y trouvons pour le premier fois des mendians apres cent cinquant lieues de voyage!" *Promenade de Dieppe, p.* 117.

What does his lordship do, therefore, with his enormous income? The canons have also very rich prebends.

† Some chroniclers record that the ruined castle of Durham was the spot where Wallace held a secret conference with Bruce for the deliverance of Scotland.

belfries of the cathedral, I am reminded that his grace, as is reported, neither exhibited himself in the light of a charitable christian nor a chivalrous prelate on the trial of George IV.'s queen. On the death of that princess—frail, alas! as the wife of king Arthur, but more unfortunate—these ancient turrets, shaken by the joyous peals of the bells, might have felt surprise on finding the fate of a queen of England celebrated like a victory. What adulation to the royal husband!*

Nothing can be more picturesque than the aspect of this vast cathedral, and of the castle, crowning a semi-circular eminence, the base of which is surrounded by the Wear. The inferior ramparts, or foundations, which are of a sombre colour, are succeeded near the river by hanging gardens of the most enchanting effect. The variegated uplands which skirt the town—the town itself, its unequal streets, its grey houses, and its roofs of deep red; the elbow formed by the Wear; and the two elliptic arches of the singular bridge of Framwelgate; all in short, that the eye surveys in the landscape, is magnificent or graceful. The influence of its contrasts is to be discovered in the poem of *Harold the Dauntless* with which they inspired Sir W. Scott; a picture of Saxon manners, when their rudeness had not been entirely mitigated by Christianity.

The Metropolitan Church of Durham, a curious

* This fact, denounced in a spirited pamphlet, was the cause of a scandalous trial, in which Mr. Brougham pleaded against the Bishop of Durham.

monument of the architecture called Anglo-Norman, recalls to mind one of the most extraordinary saints of the legend, St. Cuthbert, whose rich shrine and tomb Henry the Eighth was the first who dared to violate. The church still contains his mysterious body, which was deemed to have remained incorruptible in spite of the lapse of centuries, and a pilgrimage to which was at one time distinguished by a succession of miracles.

It is known that this pious abbot reposed in peace in his favourite isle of Lindisfane, when the monks, compelled to fly from the fury of the Danes, carried with them his coffin as their most precious relic, and stopped not, by the saint's order, till they reached the spot now occupied by Durham. This sacred corpse, which put to flight the enemies of the town where it found its last asylum, had a marked aversion for females. Two curious girls, who had disguised themselves in male attire in order to inspect it more closely, were detected, and condemned to do penance in a procession, clad in the indecorous costume which they had assumed. Queen Philipa, wife of Edward the Third, having come to see her husband when residing in the Priory, assumed her usual place after supper on the conjugal couch, in ignorance of the ungallant caprices of the worthy Saint Cuthbert. On a sudden, the affrighted monks ran and knocked at the door of the bed-chamber, which was opened by the monarch in person, whom they apprized of the dissatisfaction they incurred the risk of causing to their patron. Edward would have

been shocked at the thought of giving the least umbrage to the church; he therefore ordered the queen to rise as quickly as possible and "la très devote princesse moulct marrie d'avrir peché par ignorance, sort dû liet en chemise, et regagne le chastel, ou elle sommeillâ seulette jusqu'au matin."

Did the present successor of St. Cuthbert inherit his aversion for the sex, including princesses?

In the county of Durham, we leave on the right the town of Sunderland, situated on a tongue of land, and celebrated for its iron bridge, invented by Thomas Payne. The more this arch, of two hundred and thirty-six feet in span, is surveyed, the more surprise is occasioned by its boldness, especially if a mast of one hundred feet in height be passing under it at the time. Sunderland has a rich trade in coal; but the coal pits of Newcastle possess a still more considerable importance. The subterranean towns, and farms at the latter place, deserve a visit from the curious, as well as those which cover the surface of the soil. Three or four hundred feet beneath the earth you traverse regular streets, like those of the better parts of London.

* * * * *

The miners are all distinguished by an air of satisfaction: they for the most part enjoy a regular health, because they are preserved from the vicissitudes of the seasons, and the air requisite is supplied in sufficient *doses*, frequently renewed. But all these subterranean wonders, including Davy's "wonderful lamp," vainly amuse the curiosity for

a time: an emotion of real pleasure is imparted by surveying, even under a wintry sky, the scenery of Northumberland, rendered picturesque by their combination of austerity, and agricultural verdure, by the ruins of the Roman wall, and the natural barrier of those Cheviot mountains, which confining vegetation to their feet, edge the horizon with the undulating seniorities of their barren crests.

Newcastle, in its present state, reveals, on the first approach, the constant perils of its situation in the times of reciprocal pillage on the northern border.

Its fortifications were especially requisite to a town so adjacent to the hardy clans of the Scotch marauders, who one night surprised and carried off one of the townsmen, while asleep in his bed. As soon as, by means of a ransom, the captive had recovered liberty, he persuaded his fellow townsmen that ramparts were their only security, and Newcastle became one of the best fortified towns on the borders. At the same time, with more celerity than its manufactures, those numerous convents were seen to rise, which have since become hospitals, infirmaries, or edifices appropriated to the meetings of many a scientific and philanthropic body. The thoughts of the Newcastle citizens are not entirely absorbed in mercantile speculations; a very spirited taste for letters is to be found in the city, combined with great amenity of manners, and very little of the pedantry which usually characterises the provincial half learned,

It was, however in one of the old monastic foundations of the place, that the famous Doctor Dunscotus resided, surnamed the subtle doctor in the schools, one of those outrageous *ergoteurs*, who are always ready to argue *de omnibus rebus, et quibusdam aliis.*

Among all the religious monuments of Newcastle, the belfry of St. Anne's Church is one of the most singular creations of Gothic architecture. No description can convey an idea of it: and accordingly Ben Jonson amused himself by describing it in an enigma. It is surmounted by a kind of tiara, formed by the intersection at right angles of four arcs of a circle, supporting a turret, which is transpierced by sculptures, and which is crowned by a pinnacle of a perfectly original character.

The manufactures of Newcastle deserve a detailed description; and my philosopher, who interrogates the merchants, while I interrogate the doctors and the *literati*, might supply me with valuable notes: but I am impatient to convey you to Scotland. We rapidly traversed Morpeth, where we had some difficulty in obtaining a passage through the herds of cattle which were going to a market held several times per month. Nor did we make longer stay at Warkworth, notwithstanding the magnificent castle of the Duke of Northumberland, the dungeon keep of which is one of the most perfect models of the military architecture of the middle ages. From the top of its battlements we had a *coup d'œil* view of the German Ocean: a little vessel entering the river

Coquet, reminded us of the old Abbess of St. Hilda, and her five pretty nuns, to whom the meeting of the haughty Marmion at Edinburgh had nearly proved so fatal. The charming ballad of Percy induced us to pay a momentary visit to the hermitage, where the unfortunate Bertram shed such bitter tears of grief for his blind jealousy, after having shed the blood of a brother, who had devoted himself to the task of delivering his captive mistress. From this asylum, the silence and solitude of which inspire a contemplative melancholy, we took the road to Alnwick, and admiringly surveyed that singular fortress, which still seems to threaten a storm of stones and javelins to the enemies of the name of Percy. In fact, a garrison, immoveable at its post, continually mans the ramparts by day and night. Those faithful bands, wounded though some of them are, are always ready, part to overwhelm you with fragments of rock, others to tranfix you with their arrows; and the rest to despatch with their battle-axes, the first audacious besiegers who may venture a scalade. Beneath these walls formerly perished Malcolm and his son William the Lion; another king of Scotland was made prisoner there. Approach, notwithstanding—those warriors are only stone statues. Remembering the tale of *Perrault*, or *The Bridal of Triermain*, you are half induced to enquire, if this vast fortress has been enchanted by a fairy, and if it be not occupied by some beauty, who for a hundred years has slept there with all her court, and with all her knights, surprised like her-

self, and turned to stone, at the moment they were seizing their arms for her defence.*

We now lost sight of the useful improvements of industry harmonizing with modern civilization, the lugubrious mines of Newcastle, the low huts of the working classes, the commodious mansions of the wealthy manufacturer, and the kilns, with the black vapours vomited from their fiery throats. Warkworth, Alnwick and Bamborough, reconcile us to the poetry of the chivalrous age. Walter Scott's heroes have received hospitality in these castles, or have menaced their ramparts: and his minstrels have caused their ceilings to echo with their songs. We are upon enchanted ground. Alnwick, alternately with Berwick and Norham, was the fortress devoted to the residence of the Governor or Warden of the English borders. These officers who held their place from the crown, were charged with the function of maintaining order to the best of their power, in the counties subjected to their jurisdiction, of repressing the Scottish marauders, and inflicting severe reprisals on the inhabitants of the other side of the Tweed. The manners of the borderers of the two nations exhibit a singular alliance of chivalrous spirit and brigandage, of religion and ferocity. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* is a faithful picture of the life led by the Scotch and English marauders. We shall return to the sub-

* We were told that the apartments of Alnwick Castle are worthy of the splendour of the noble dukes of Northumberland; but we merely passed.

ject: for we have not yet set foot on the Scottish territory. But lest poetical allusion should induce me to paint the manners of antiquity in too favourable colours, I hasten to express my concurrence with the critics of the *Edinburgh Review*, in their opinion that the feudal system was hostile to agriculture and industry, and that general welfare has been the definitive result of its abolition.

It is not in the part of Northumberland where we now are, that a reasoner would be induced to deny the advantage of this definitive result of the new order of things. Escaping in some measure from its roads, blackened as they are with the traces of pit coal, and breathing a freer air than the gaseous atmosphere of Sunderland and Newcastle, we now cast an agreeably surprised glance over fields cultivated according to that agricultural system, of which the Northumberland farmers have reason to be proud. But even while suppressing some more direct objections, which I might now oppose to the existing system, it may be permitted me to observe, that the transition from vassalage to the state of modern improvement was originally in this county, as well as in Scotland, more fatal to the people than might at first be imagined. The feudal system tended to increase population, in dividing and sub-dividing the domains among the greatest possible number of tenants. When this system was abolished, the reformation at the same time closed, or delivered into the hands of greedy courtiers, the monasteries, which assembled and

fed on their peculiar demesnes the superfluous population, which their natural protectors rejected. That population, moreover, was for a considerable time rejected from their ranks by the industrious classes; for the latter would admit no one among them except he had served an apprenticeship, and felt an objection arising from an *esprit de corps* to the education of the children of labourers. The great landed proprietors, embarrassed in the first instance by the employment of too great an extent of territory, or its over-production, in consequence of the deficiency of interior communications, which were less numerous than at present, for a long time neglected agriculture, for the care of flocks; because the trade in English wool, which was in request in all the European markets, was the safest speculation. Crimes, to which misery and hunger give impulse, rapidly multiply. In this part of England they have diminished since the increased working of the mines, which render that devouring impost, called the *poor tax*, less oppressive than in other counties of England. In our time, notwithstanding some slight storms, every thing has re-assumed a face of tranquillity and prosperity. But another objection which I would urge against the actual system of farming in Northumberland, is founded on the division of the lands into farms of too large a description. The rent of some of them is as high as £6000 sterling. Means of improvement are certainly more practicable with such a capital as the farmers must employ, who tenant farms of

this description. But two or three farmers, who choose to combine, may exert a fatally monopolizing influence over the markets, by engrossing not only their own peculiar products, but also those of the small farmers in their vicinity, in order subsequently to subject them and the whole department by famine. Hence, what ought to be the patriarchal character of the farmer is changed into that of a greedy speculator. But besides this, the system has given birth between the farmer and the consumer to a race of public blood-suckers called *middle men*, who offering to the first the advantage of selling his produce to a single individual, undertake to make the necessary advances to the miller and the baker: in short, there are other speculators, who are continually gambling in the rise of corn and flour. It may be easily conceived, therefore, that bread in this country often reaches a price which would appear exorbitant in France. I forbear adverting to the transitory distress which ruined so many English farmers by the re-action of the events of 1814.

LETTER LXXVI.

TO MR. V. CHAPUINS.

If I had met with the laird of Monkbairns at Cornhill, I should have abandoned myself to the

pleasure of chatting with him as long as he pleased on the castrametation of the ancients; for at Cornhill are to be seen magnificent vestiges of a Roman wall; but I was impatient to cross the Tweed; and not far from us, at Coldstream, I perceived the elegant arches of a bridge, on the centre of which we might say we were in Scotland. My philosopher and myself surveyed it with the impatience of children. Coldstream is an historical name. It was from this village, the name of which Monk gave to a new regiment of guards, that that general departed for London. Was he then meditating the restoration of the Stuarts? Did he maintain his silent reserve through indecision or policy? And when on his arrival in London, he declared against the parliament, was it not because he perceived with his own eyes, while traversing England, the popular lassitude of a usurpation, which the death of Cromwell had divested of the transitory legitimacy of glory and genius? I cannot attribute to a character such as Monk's, an entirely disinterested and patriotic character. He probably made up his resolution for fear of being anticipated by another, and making a sudden metamorphosis from a republican to a courtier, he affected to restore the crown unconditionally to Charles II. When a revolution, fortunate or unfortunate, has brought every thing into question, and broken all the links of the social chain, no restoration can be durable without a new contract between the nation and the prince. After this frank exposition of my principles, I may be per-

mitted to add, that, seduced perhaps by the associations which Walter Scott has recently conjured up in favour of the Stuarts, and perhaps by way of opposition to the house of Brunswick, which no great virtue has yet rendered legitimate in my eyes, I have a poetic attachment for the Stuarts, and I should be sorry to be induced to think that there are no longer any Jacobites in Scotland.

At length we set foot in that country, which the genius of Walter Scott has diademed with the halo of a poetical glory, more rational than that of the old bard Ossian. To judge of it from a first glance, the land which I had pictured as sterile or severely beautiful, was not discoverable; the Tweed wound among enamelled meadows: an elegant villa first presented itself to our view, succeeded here and there by a few ruins of picturesque castles. We then traversed an uncultivated country; but the road soon resumed its variety of scenery. The town of Kelso, where we stopped for about an hour, contains little in itself worthy of remark; but its old abbey of Anglo-Norman architecture is of a fine style, and contrasts in a picturesque manner with the rural and graceful environs of the town. The trees of the park of Fleurus, and those of Springwood, add to the general effect. With the first shades of twilight we again set forward, and arrived at Dalkeith, a castle illustrated by the name of Buccleugh, which Sir Walter Scott so often introduces into his verses. We perceived a groupe of mountains

marked in vague outlines on the horizon of the sky, illuminated at once by the light of the moon, and of the polar day. We hear the names of Arthur's Seat and Salisbury's Craig pronounced around us, without being able to discriminate one of these rocks from the other; we were, in fine, entering Edinburgh, and on the point of alighting at the Bull hotel.

From the time of our quitting York somewhat dissatisfied with the rain on the outside of the stage, my philosopher saw nothing of me, except when we stopped, and at the inns on the road, or when simultaneously abandoning, he his cushions, and I my dickey, we quitted the road, in order, like peripatetic philosophers, to explore some bye locality. From Newcastle, an additional attraction had endeared to my companion the charms of his *travelling prison*, as I think Sir Walter Scott calls the mail in his *Heart of Midlothian*. A charming young English lady and her father took their seats in the vehicle. It was now my turn to play the philosopher, and Mr. Charles F——e seriously invested me with the title, in order to monopolize without a rival the little attentions of French gallantry. On my part I acquired the advantage of being characterized as a most learned doctor, in the recommendatory letters which the young English lady consigned to us on taking leave at the gates of a castle situated in our road. While Mr. Charles F——e, in the lower regions of the stage, yielded to the charms of a platonic conversation with his pretty fellow traveller, I from my airy emi-

nence, inspired by the country, or the historical name of the ancient ruins which occasionally occurred, amused myself with attaching ideal figures to the various pictures successively unrolled before my eyes. I lent names, moreover, to the various personages who displayed themselves here and there in the environs of the road. After remarking the general character of the Scottish physiognomy, (long face, high cheek bones, grey eyes, cold look, or smile announcing a mixture of surprise and sagacity), I readily transformed the whole into heroes of Sir Walter Scott. An old laird, who was distinguished by an air of *bonhomie* and affectation at the same time, became the Baron of Bradwardine. By the side of him stood a plebeian, in a strange or imperfect costume, with a vague look, and singing an unintelligible couplet with singular volubility. This was Davie Gellatly. Beneath the entry of a chateau, a young female of noble deportment, but somewhat haughty and disdainful, reminded me of Flora Mac Ivor, on a visit to her friend Rose. A modest young female peasant was going to church with her bible ; that was Jeannie Deans, about to pray for her sister. Did a worthy farmer of frank deportment, with a countenance of good humour, pass by with his dogs? That was Dandie Dinmont. At the bottom of a hillock a party of gipsies were gravely smoking their pipes; they probably composed a part of the wandering family of Meg Merrilies. And yon old beggar, with his wallet and blue mantle, who waits for our alms without humiliat-

ing himself to utter a plaintive adulation; perhaps he had known Edie Ochiltree, who had communicated to him the secret of his independence. In short, from the moment of quitting Coldstream, I felt myself to be on that Scottish soil which the wizard had touched with his wand, and whence so many original shapes have emanated to take their place among the associations of all that has vividly interested ourselves during the various epochs of our lives.

We are at length in Edinburgh.

LETTER LXXVII.

TO M. A. CLAPIER, AVOCAT.

You are wrong, my dear Alexander, for not taking a journey to Scotland. I might have pitted you against a brother lawyer, against whom I have found it difficult to make head.* During one of those hours of gossip, with which one is easily induced to while away the evening in the coffee room of an inn, we contracted an acquaintanceship at Newcastle with a young law student, from the office of Mr. Williams in London, and who, according to his own account, was going to

* I have a more real cause for regret in thinking that my friend Alexander might have assisted me in my study of the Scotch law.

devote three days to a tour of Scotland. In the character of modest and silent strangers, we had smiled at the simplicity of the young cockney, at his peremptory orders to the waiter and barmaid, and the detail of his scheme of rapid excursion. It appeared to him that three days were sufficient to inspect all that was curious in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and the Highlands. We had been induced to flatter his characteristic precipitancy, and he had already pressed us into the service, not disguising that he reckoned on our joining him, in order to make an economical division of the common expenses of the journey; but when we were about to set out, I designedly pleaded for our excuse the irrevocable basis of an agreement we had made in his absence with the office of a stage coach, the itinerary of which was not in accord with his. I could not live a supernumerary hour with gentry who speculate on a first condescension, in order to make it the occasion of exacting a second. I have as mortal a fear of the direction of these social tyrants, as I should have of that of the *gend'arme* who was conducting me to prison. The first person whom we found at table in the little coffee-room of the Bull inn, was our hurried student, who, although he had not been an hour in Edinburgh, and was there for the first time in his life, offered to act as guide for us on the next day. But he drew from his *portfeuille*, a little manuscript list of the curiosities of the town, and assured us that in six hours we should have sufficiently viewed and reviewed them, to be enabled

to depart at the same time as himself. Our lawyer-ling would not take my hint, and the philosopher and myself, induced possibly with some curiosity at the prospect of seeing Edinburgh in six hours, promised to rise betimes in the morning.

The next morning we were called before eight o'clock. Notwithstanding our dilatoriness, which must have naturally annoyed the impatience of our new friend, who after having already finished his own breakfast, assisted us in getting through ours, we were ready by nine o'clock; and at three o'clock in the afternoon we had already seen all the curiosities of Edinburgh noted in the itinerary of our student, who had, as he said, pencilled down a sufficient collection of memorabilia to render him the oracle of his office for three weeks to come. At first I felt a little distaste to this mode of being carried about against my will; but the promenade shortly furnished such varied and at the same time such comic incidents, that I made up my mind to enjoy the ridicule of the affair. The assurance with which the student provided himself with a new cicerone at the corner of every street, and at every fresh edifice, was worth observing. He had promised to carry back his remarks, and each new object supplied him with matter; but the note once made *a tort et a travers* (for a second and corrected information changed nothing) his object was accomplished. I perceived afterwards, that either the rapidity of our excursion, or the difference of our idiom, or the malice of some old Celt, piqued by the pert tone

of the enquirer, had led him to mistake the Piræus for the name of a man. What numerous sights did I see that day which I have never been fated to see again! how many *piquante* observations about to be carried back to Mr. Williams's office! At last, at five o'clock, the student, whom I named Mr. Busy-body, took his departure, having all Edinburgh at his fingers' ends.

It is now my turn to take you over Edinburgh with equal rapidity; but from my own notes, which I have been at the pains to verify by more than one excursion.

Arthur's Seat is an eminence, almost as familiar to any reader of Sir Walter Scott, as Montmartre is to the Parisians. This basaltic rock, not only commands Edinburgh, but the surrounding hills, which themselves appear to form a part of a city chiefly situated on unequal eminences, and united by bridges or causeways. It is from the conic summit of Arthur's Seat, that I could wish to sketch a panorama of the northern Athens; that is to say, the most extraordinary panorama which any city in Europe can supply. It has at least very greatly effaced the impression I retained of Rouen, as seen from the road to Paris, and even that of the still more admired view of the beautiful Marseilles, depicting itself with its bastions and its plain of waters, to the astonished eye of the traveller from that point of the road to Aix called the *Viste*.

On the pinnacle of Arthur's Seat, we are 830 feet above the level of the sea. On the first day

of our survey, while none of the grouped or dispersed localities were known to us, the view was like the spectacle of a fairy land. On reviewing them with the faculty of being enabled to assign their names, the double enchantment of the prospect in itself, and of the associations of history, tradition, or poetry, which each name revives, impart an enthusiasm, which I should have thought till now exclusively reserved for a natal soil.

To the east, the vast extent of the ocean blends with the azure of the sky, and farther to the north contracts itself gradually towards the mouth of the Forth, between the variegated coasts of Lothian and the county of Fife. The eye agreeably reposes on the islands with which the gulf is gemmed, and when the sun mingles the rich tints of its radiance with their verdure, they may be compared, in concurrence with the poet's expression in Marmion, "to emeralds chased in gold."

On one side is Inch-Keith, with its lofty light-house; the Isle of May, formerly consecrated to St. Adrian, and on which another pharos offers protection to pilots; Inch-Colm, famous for its ancient convent, founded under the auspices of Saint Colomba; and Inch-Garvie, formerly fortified; if I turn my head, or lower my line of view from the coast, without depressing it so much as to embrace the town, I perceive to the south, the mountains of Braid and the chain of Pentland; to the west, the elegant eminence of Corstorphine; immediately beneath me the demi-circular escarpement of Salisbury's Craig, resembling a mu-

ral crown. All these heights, and that of Arthur's Seat, compose a picturesque amphitheatre, in the midst of which Edinburgh arises, with its castle seated on a central rock of 350 feet in height, and with a terminating hill to the east, called Calton Hill, surmounted by the observatory, and the monumental turret erected to the memory of Nelson.

The first time that I climbed the summit of Arthur's Seat, a cloud of smoke covered the roofs of the houses; the slant rays of the sun only pervaded a portion of it, which they began to render transparent, when suddenly a gust from the sea at first divided and finally dispersed the whole of this dome of vapours. The double city appeared, with all its contrasts, like the scene of an opera; to the left developed themselves the mass of the dark battlements of the old town, which beginning at the gothic castle of Holyrood is crowned by the species of tiara which the belfry of St. Giles' composes, and terminated by the feudal citadel; to the right appeared the new town, entirely regular, and of dazzling whiteness; the one, as befitted the austere and sombre daughter of the middle age; the other, as became the elegant daughter of civilization. So appeared the unpolished Roderic Dhu, and the elegant Fitz-James unmistrustfully reposing beneath the shelter of the same tented canopy.

Let us awhile admire Edinburgh from this favourable distance. When re-descending into her rectangular streets, or the windings of her ancient

alleys, we shall probably be obliged to criticise in detail, both her ancient monuments and her new erections. But from Arthur's Mount, or even nearer, from Nelson's monument, all is picturesque grand, and sublime. The squares of the new town, the cupola of St. George's church, the Trajan column, erected to the memory of Lord Melville, the brilliant terrace of Princes street, the porticos of the North Bridge, that magnificent street which extends to the Piræus (I designate the port of Leith by that name); in short, every thing which the eye embraces is worthy of the Athens of the north; nor have the sombre mansions of the old town any appearance of exaggeration in their height, although some of them reach twelve stories in height. The fancy delights in indulging in the belief that they were constructed by giants, and that the dark colour of their walls is the evidence of a date as ancient as the rocks in which their foundations are embedded. It would seem as if the architects of the city, having before their eyes the eternal monuments of Arthur's *throne*, and the battlements celebrated as Salisbury's Craig, aspired at vying with those edifices of nature. The audacity of their structure astonishes, but pleases the eye, and poetry seizes on them as its own domain. We shall return to plain prose, as I have intimated, on a nearer survey of the houses of Edinburgh.

LETTER LXXVIII.

TO M. G.

I HAVE hitherto attempted to sketch a poetic, but incomplete, rather than flattering panorama of Edinburgh, such as it appears to the eye of those who survey it from the basaltic seat of Arthur, or from the observatory of Calton Hill. We are now about to descend into the town; but I surmise that more than one impatient reader will be tempted to interrupt me with the enquiry, if we are to meet there with the personage who has restored its ancient lustre to the royal crown of his romantic country,

"My own romantic town:"
MARMION.

he who has discovered in the midst of the prosaic discussions of too civilized an age, the poetic titles of its origin and importance in other ages. I am impatient to speak, at length, of Sir Walter Scott, and of making him speak; but it appears to me that I ought first to complete the picture, of which he will shortly become the principal figure; we shall arrive at that main object in time, and I could do no less than advert to it in the meanwhile. I have promised to adhere to the truth; and to convey my impressions with fidelity. I will confess, therefore, that it is the

great poet of Scotland himself, such as I have seen him this afternoon, who has recalled me to that prosaic domain with which I menaced you from the sublime eminences of Arthur's Seat.

There was a horse race celebrated to-day. I was not aware of it till I observed equestrian and pedestrian passengers returning to town in the same equally dusty condition. A west wind, which is rather frequent at Edinburgh at all seasons of the year, occasionally conveyed light clouds of it into the streets. In the meanwhile we walked up and down Princes-street with M. Duryer, the secretary to the consulate, for an acquaintance with whom I am indebted to a friendly letter of M. Arm. Bertin. I had myself led the conversation to the subject of the bard of *Marmion*, when M. Duryer directed my eye towards three individuals who were approaching us along the pavement. "Sir Walter Scott" said he, "is one of them; it is he who will presently be at your left hand." In fact, we should have elbowed him if I had not stood a little aside. I had thus full time for a minute survey; and although sufficiently apprized that there was nothing remarkable in his exterior, my imagination had invested him till that moment with so many poetical attributes, that I felt disappointed, and quite chagrined at finding him dissimilar to the ideal portrait I had depicted. We grow attached to our least substantiated illusions.

The person who thus approached us had reached the middle age; he was of a stature which would

naturally have been tall, but he was condemned by the infirmity of a club foot to limp aukwardly on a stick at every step. His deportment was characterised by something of the robust and plebeian—I may even say rustic. He wore a green coat* with short skirts, wide trowsers. In a word, there was nothing remarkable in his *costume;* for I cannot bring myself to describe it, piece by piece, like one of those knights so minutely depicted by the poet's pencil, whether in verse or prose. Nothing graceful, neither in the oval of his countenance, nor in his features: florid with health; high coloured, perhaps by walking; grey eyes, with projecting eyebrows, which gave a hard expression to his look; a large forehead; but at the moment in question bathed with perspiration; thinly scattered hair, ash coloured, and growing grey, with a natural tendency to curl; the superior lip out of proportion; in fine, all the lower part of the figure ordinary; such were the personal characteristics of the author of the *Lady of the Lake.*

I am now anxiously enquiring of myself whether, notwithstanding the reputation he bears for amenity, wit, and charming gaiety of conversation, I do not run some risk, in desiring to see him closer still, of destroying the last relic of an agreeable illusion. In the meanwhile I already detect

* It was one of those habits, *vestes*, recently introduced at Paris under the name of Three per Cents., or Villèle coats; for little men leave their names to little things.

myself making an effort to dignify his vulgar traits in my recollection. I strive to think that I have probably surveyed them at an unfavourable moment, when some disagreeable reminiscence injured their expression. I farther recalled to mind that I had in the same manner, on first sight, incorrectly judged the features of one of our greatest geniuses, who was in a cotton night-cap when he deigned to receive me in his apartment.

I shall see Sir Walter again. I may be enabled to trace a more agreeable portrait of him, without being less true. If any person thinks these details puerile, it is not for such as him that I am writing; I address myself to those who enthusiastically study the bust of a great man, and endeavour to detect there, in common with Dr. Gall, the indications of his genius in the least protuberances of his cranium. I hope, therefore, to return to the subject; meantime I shall conduct you through the old town.

At the foot of Salisbury's Craig, Edinburgh commences with the castle of Holyrood, whither I have not yet extended my walk. From the court of this palace, a long street ascends to the castle, which street the citizens of Edinburgh pronounce the finest in the world; it traverses a space of 5570 feet, its greatest width being ninety. It is there that it is called High-street. From Holyrood to that point its name is Canongate. In the the midst of Canongate formerly stood two crosses, one of which, named Garth Cross, served to mark

the limits of the sanctuary of Holyrood. This sanctuary still enjoys its ancient privileges.—Debtors find within its bounds an inviolable asylum, subjected solely to the jurisdiction of the Duke of Hamilton, the hereditary governor. If they contract new debts within the precincts, they may be sued by their new creditors, who may obtain the right of taking their persons: but with regard to their exterior creditors, they are in perfect security throughout the entire suburb; and in what is called the King's Park, which comprehends Arthur's Seat and Salisbury's Craig within its purlieu.

The highest part of Canongate is composed of houses very ancient, and particularly ill built in the midst of their eccentric irregularity. But on the grey and sombre walls are seen carvings, more or less mutilated, of coats of arms, which attest that it was in the houses now rented out to the lower classes where formerly resided those proud Scottish barons, whose descendants have deserted the vicinity of the palace, since it has been merely occupied by the vain representations of royalty. Advancing to that part of the street which takes the name of High-street, and where some noble escutcheons still attract admiration, we encounter the house where was born the famous John Knox, that seditious apostle of Scottish reform, who caused the feudal ceilings of Holyrood, even in the presence of Mary Stuart, to echo to the harshest tone of remonstrance. On each side, the main

street is intersected by lateral streets, or little narrow alleys, wherein the Pyramuses and Thisbes of Edinburgh may squeeze each others hands from the opposite windows. Let us hasten by them; for occasionally from these loopholes in the walls, which usurp the names of windows, some of those fatal showers sometimes fall which are called *passa res** at Marseilles, and here *gardez-los.*

This expression, derived from French, (*Gare Le'au*), is a cry of warning which much more often follows than precedes the descent of the liquid. In real fact, one is threatened with the same danger, not only amidst the twilight of the lateral lanes of the High-street, but even in the wider streets of the New Town. In the colours of the houses, and along the exterior walls, moreover, you perceive the presence of perfumes in a solid form. I warned you that we were going to traverse a domain of prose.

The modern embellishments of this part of High-street may be conceived, where near the quadrangular base of Tron Church, you have on

* *Pasta res?* is no body passing? is a fatal signal. You generally hear it when it is too late. The inhabitants of beautiful Marseilles often make singular barters with each other. You may often, evening and morning, see the servant of one house depositing the contents of her slop-pail on the other side of the laundry gutter, and the servant of the opposite house the next moment comes to repay the debt in the same manner. While referring to the filthy customs, which in our southern towns render the approach to our most magnificent monuments so dangerous, one is reminded of the remark of Joseph II., when visiting the arenas of Nismes. "M. Le Consul, is this also a work of the Romans?"

your left what is called Southbridge-street, leading to the university, the hospital, &c.; and on your right, Northbridge-street, uniting the Old with the New Town. These streets and bridges produce singular surprises. You hear a murmur beneath the arches, and you lean over the parapet in order to survey the river which flows beneath; but you look in vain; it is the murmur of a third town situated in the ravine. This ravine was formerly filled with water; it is called North Loch. There commences the line of those lofty houses, the eleventh and twelfth stories of which appear like hawks' nests, constructed by the birds of Aristophanes. The height of these houses may be thus explained:—From the ravine to the level of the bridge, they are not above four or five stories; but instead of roof, a new house is superadded to the former.

Pursuing our way towards the castle, we vainly search for the tollbooth, or ancient prison, also called the *Heart of Midlothian*. It was levelled in 1817, as an old ruin, and the operation uncovered one of the angles of St. Giles's church, the belfry of which has so picturesque an effect from a distance. On a near view, this church exhibits nothing but a heavy mass of masonry uncharacterized by any style, and the colour of which is rather dirty than grey. The ancient gothic cross, whence formerly the royal proclamations were issued, has disappeared, and no trace remains of it, in common with the prison, but the description which

immortalizes them in the works of Sir Walter Scott—

> "Dun Edin's cross, a pillar'd stone,
> Rose on a turret octagon."
>
> MARMION.

To the left, a little higher, are the courts of justice. On the right, the only house worthy of interesting us (the bank is in a neighbouring street), is Archibald Constable's shop, one of the least brilliant of the Scottish book trade, but which issues quarterly twelve thousand copies of the *Edinburgh Review*, and twice a year thirty thousand copies of a new romance by the author of *Waverley*. We are now at the castle gate, after having scaladed a last division of the street called the Lawn Market, and an esplanade called the Castle Hill. The castle exhibits nothing worth describing in its interior, nor the barracks, nor the arsenal, nor the chamber where James Stuart was born, nor even the regalia, the crown, sceptre and sword of Scotland, lately discovered by a miracle, and proudly shewn to visitors in token of ancient national independence. The view of the castle from a distance, and that which is enjoyed from its terrace, are worthy more than all it contains.

Descending some tortuous streets to the south, we enter the oblong square called the *Grass Market*, where criminals were formerly executed. They were conducted in procession from the Tol-

booth; the gibbet was erected and carried away during the night.*

The spot is still shewn, where, in the sedition of 1736, the populace inflicted such terrible reprisals on Captain Porteus, while religiously observing all the forms of punishment according to law.

When, on adverting to this riot, one raises the eye towards the castle on its scarped rock, one is astonished at the audacity of the people, who might have been so easily quelled by the cannon of that commanding citadel.

I have slightly referred to the Scotch Bank, an entirely modern edifice, and contrasting by the whiteness of its walls with the old masonry which masks its entrance from the High-street, but which is undergoing rapid removal. The bank is also partly situated in the ravine of North Loch, and it is seen from the New Town, which is accessible by a kind of pier, which leads to Princes-street. This magnificent terraced street, the rendezvous of lounging dandies, and the favourite resort of Scottish belles, who have no objection to their survey, protracts itself to the foot of the Calton Hill, in a parallel direction with George-street and Queen-street, handsome streets, with broad pavements. Here we enter the New Town, where all persons *comme il faut* reside, and which

* As the apparatus of punishment was prepared before day-light, it appeared, Sir W. Scott tells us, as if the gibbet had issued from the earth during the night, by the incantation of some evil demon; and he adds that he remembers the fear with which his school-fellows surveyed those sinister preparations of death.

is composed of fine squares, circuses, or quadrants, rectangular streets, Greek or gothic temples, houses with peristyles, public buildings, columns, &c.; but, it must be confessed, that in so many fine squares, the general effect of which is so magnificent, and which do not boast a higher date than forty years, one is disagreeably surprised to meet with so ungraceful a style of architecture, so many residences regularly ill-constructed, so many casements without entablature, a church which may be compared to a porridge pot reversed, and other exhibitions of bad taste in all that concerns detail. There is a talk of raising a national temple on Calton Hill, and it is proposed, for that purpose, to make it a copy of the Parthenon; this will, perhaps, be the only edifice truly worthy of the designation of Athens; but, as I have before said, the *tout ensemble* of the city astonishes the stranger at first sight; I can easily conceive the admiration of those, who, having merely passed through it, have only had time to admire. Unfortunately for the New Town, if it possess Sir W. Scott, it is also the residence of our consul, from whom I have just borrowed the comparison of a church to a porridge pot, and I will defy any enthusiast to traverse Edinburgh twice in Mr. Hug—'s company, without being disenchanted. There is also something of a melancholy character in the silence which reigns in the New Town, when you have passed Princes-street. The chief animation and bustle is confined to the Old Town, where every floor of its colossal houses has its inhabitants;

in general, each of the large mansions of the New Town are occupied by a single family. The students, the lawyers, the men of business, as soon as morning arrives, hurry from the other side of North Loch. These immense streets then remain unpeopled. *Edificaverunt sibi solitudines;* the wealthy of Edinburgh may be said, in scriptural language, to have built themselves a vast solitude. These wealthy classes no longer consist of the descendants of the Douglases and the ancient feudal barons. Whose noble mansion is this? you inquire.—A lawyer's. And this?—the same. And this other?—that is his also. It reminds one of the history of the Marquis of Carabas, applied to fifty of those *writers of the signet*, (or W. S.'s). The higher class of solicitors are so named, because they alone enjoy the privilege of signing certain acts subscribed with the royal seal. These gentry having become the stewards, or *hommes d'affaires* to the Scottish nobility, manage all the revenues of proprietorship, make advances to noblemen, &c. &c.; and these, &c. mean, that they conclude by ennobling themselves on becoming proprietors in their turn.

Although Edinburgh, in a more especial manner, may be considered a town of nobility and lawyers, commerce, however, has also its Crœsuses. The port of Leith constitutes a portion of the town, and in Great Britain it may be said, that there is not a wave which does not bring a guinea. At Leith is to be found a new, numerous, active, and bustling population. There are as many contrasts

in the manners of the various inhabitants of Edinburgh, as there is in the aspect of each quarter of that singular capital. All these classes have had their illustrious men, whose monuments are to be met with among those which adorn the town; the column dedicated to Lord Melville, the round turret, the mausoleum of Hume, the statue of the president Blair in the courts of justice, &c. He was only a jeweller, who, having become the banker of the princes and their creditor, devoted the landed property which they were compelled to cede to him, to establishments of public benevolence. George Heriot figures in the *Adventures of Nigel;* but as a still greater honour,* his name remains attached to the Heriot hospital, one of the finest edifices of his native city. This asylum was endowed by him with an income of 5000*l.* sterling; and, according to his intentions, it was to be a gratuitous college for the children of poor traders.

This hospital, situated near the Grass Market, has property even in the modern town. Heriot's Row was doubtless built on ground appertaining to it. Behind Heriot's Row, the inhabitants of Edinburgh shew you Gabriel's Road, and tell you a tragic event to which the name of Gabriel refers.

This Gabriel was a young presbyterian minister, attached as tutor to a rich family, in which he

* More than one traveller call this asylum a hospital, and imagine that it contains none but sick persons. The name deceived me like the rest; but as I make a professional point of inspecting the hospitals, in preference to all other institutions, I ocularly inspected it.

had the education of two children, from ten to twelve years old. The young tutor, although of austere and puritanical manners, could not see, without involuntary emotion, the pretty *femme de chambre* belonging to the mansion. One day, while passing through the anti-chamber, abandoning himself to an irresistible impulse, he approached the young damsel, gave her a kiss and fled. Unhappily, he had been perceived by the youngest of his pupils, who told the tale to his brother, and he again to his mother. The lady allowed herself to make a joke of it, which drove the tutor to despair. In the delirium of his rage, he resolved to be revenged on the poor children, who, as he thought, had dishonoured him. The following Sunday, in coming from church, he took them to walk according to custom; but on arriving at the spot now called *Gabriel's Road*, and which, at that time, in lieu of houses, exhibited no object but a vast extent of fields, he drew a knife and plunged it into the heart of the eldest of the children; the other screamed, and tried to escape; but the assassin pursued him with the bloody knife in his hand, murdered him like his brother, and then sat down, astounded, doubtless, by his own rage, and renouncing flight after having accomplished his vengeance. Great numbers of the inhabitants of Edinburgh were witnesses of this frightful revenge; for nothing limited the view from the old town, as far as *Gabriel's Road*; but the ravine presented a barrier which prevented the inhabitants from giving sufficiently prompt assist-

ance to the second victim. The people seized the ferocious murderer and hurried him before a magistrate. An old law of Scotland, prescribes, that instant justice shall be done on a murderer surprised *flagrante delicto*, or *red hand*, according to the Scotch expression. The application of this law was immediately enforced. Gabriel was hanged with the knife suspended from his neck and with his hands still bathed in the blood of his two innocent victims.*

LETTER LXXIX.

EDINBURGH, in proudly proclaiming herself the Athens of Great Britain, does not alone refer to the analogies of her site, to her Piraëus (Leith), her Acropolis, with its citadel (the castle), to her future Parthenon, (the projected temple on Calton Hill), &c. Edinburgh is still more proud of aspiring to the designation, on the score of her philosophers, orators, critics, and poets, or rather of her learned

* It is not improbable, that this may be a tradition invented gratuitously, although unfortunately characterised by an appearance of truth; but I refer to my authors, who are, Mr. J. Wilson, and Mr. Lockhart, Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law. The tradition, in fact, is only an appendage to that which is referred to in the first volume of *The Heart of Midlothian.* I yesterday paid a visit to *Muschat's Cairn;* that is to say, the site not far from Arthur's Seat.

societies, which are not all, unfortunately, Academies. But every body here occupies himself more or less with literature and science; every body conceives himself to derive some importance as a Scotchman, from the formidable *Edinburgh Review*. Even the ladies aspire to the exertion of their little literary influence.

"Nous sommes tous d'Athenes sur ce point."

You will tell me that I am about to sketch a somewhat pedantic city, and, with some exceptions, you have guessed correctly. I shall therefore commence with generalities before I proceed to the consideration of individuals.

I forget who it is that has called Edinburgh a large book market; more books, in proportion to its size, are published there, than in any city of the world; but does that not also prove, that there only the booksellers set themselves up for oracles; that is to say, the echoes of some literary *coterie*. It is from the shop of Constable, the most considerable of all, that the *Edinburgh Review* governs the learned and political world. Its editors are accused of assuming an arrogant and disdainful air; accustomed to impose their opinions tyrannically in Scotland, they become irritated at the slightest contradiction, and tremble at a joke cut at their expense, more than a serious refutation; but at table, they sometimes banter each other; and over the bottle become tolerable companions enough. Besides his little shop in High-street, Archibald the great has one of the most

elegant houses in the Old Town. That critical giant, the *Edinburgh Review*, is constantly harassed by a hostile dwarf, *Blackwood's Monthly Magazine;* a tory journal, anti-philosophical, occasionally religious, or, rather, slanderously devout. Its criticism is distinguished by a singular combination of enthusiasm and satirical buffoonery, of wit and bad manners. It is the champion of the lakists; for Mr. Wilson is one of the editors; it is still more specially the champion of Sir Walter Scott; since his son-in-law, Lockhart, the barrister, is one of the most active contributors. Mr. Constable is a skilful man of business; but simple in his manners, comprising all he has learnt in a few phrases, and content with being the richest bookseller in Scotland. Mr. Blackwood aspires to the character of being the wittiest. There is an air of *bonhomie* in the figure and deportment of Constable; Blackwood has at once a hard and crafty look: his smile is habitually sardonic; he reads the manuscript which he purchases, and dictates his opinions to the editors; so he, at least, himself, gave me to understand, on my politely asking him whether he did not write himself, and on his replying in the negative. His library, in the middle of Princes-street, is elegant; in an interior room, at a table well supplied with journals, books, and prints, I passed an hour occasionally in reading and observing. Mr. Blackwood and his journal are much dreaded in Edinburgh; *ridiculum acri*, &c.; for otherwise the *Blackwood Magazine* writes for the minority. The presbyterian

church is whig; the bar is whig; commerce is whig; and the people whig also; the King of England is no where held in so much contempt as here; they do not do him even the honour to hate him; that feeling is reserved for Lord Castlereagh; after the queen's trial, there was a general illumination in honour of her acquittal. The magistrates alone are ministerial at Edinburgh. They all depend on the patronage of Lord Melville, and Lord Melville, at each new election of members of parliament, or municipal magistrates, pays or sells all the consciences of the placemen to the English ministry; but we shall return to this subject.

Two booksellers of the Old Town, exhibit another kind of contrast. Messrs. Laing and Son, in College-street, have a superb classical library, where there is a meeting of all such Scotch and other amateurs, who prefer to the snow-white pages of the modern library, an *Elzevir* or an *Aldus*, discoloured by learned dust. I have sometimes thought of my friend, C. Nodier, in this sanctuary of Caledonian bibliography, and only yesterday purchased for him the last copy of *Sallust*, stereotyped by Geddes, in 1765. So little attention is, however, paid in Edinburgh to classical literature, that the coterie of Bibliopoles is the least numerous of all. Messrs. Laing and Son's *cellar* bears, nevertheless, a high reputation. The antiquary, Sir W. Scott, is naturally a friend of Messrs. Laing. Mr. Laing, the elder, who is an old gentleman of superior manners, speaks to me always in French, and sometimes transfers into

that language such local idioms as are incapable of translation. He never omits asking me—"M. le docteur, have you seen *the chevalier* this morning?" That *chevalier* is Sir Walter Scott. The younger Mr. Laing is a well-informed bookseller, modest, of prepossessing manners, and devoid of affectation.

Proceeding from Messrs. Laing to Messrs. Miller and Manners, established opposite Constable, is like going into a new world. The latter is the *rendezvous* of the blue stockings, and of all the literary *beau monde* in Edinburgh. I pass a delicious hour there daily, in listening to the chit chat of the pretty women, who visit the shop in order to put themselves *au courant* of all that is fashionable in literature. Mr. Manners, who is a little calm and reflective man, is better adapted to commune with the *amateurs* of his own sex. Mr. Miller, with his affected salutation and smile, does the honour of the back shop to the feminine amateurs. The shop itself, properly so called, is attended by the clerks; the apartment at the extremity, fitted up with cases replete with well bound books, and tables covered with all the *chef-d'œuvres* of calcography, is positively a bibliopolical *boudoir*. The gallantry with which Mr. Miller runs to the door on the entry of a lady; the complaisance with which he leads her to a chair; the soft speech with which he responds to her questions, and the zeal with which he exhibits to her an engraving or a morocco binding, are worth seeing. And then again, whether she has made a purchase or not,

the same gallantry, the same complaisance, the same soft speechifying, the same devotedness, are displayed in leading the charmed fair visitor back to her carriage. If no other beauty immediately claim the same attentions, he then turns towards those who have followed him with their eyes through all this process, and perfectly satisfied with himself, seeks for the approbation he has earned in their applauding looks. How often has he then approached me with the remark—"Well, doctor, did you ever see a prettier woman?" To say the truth, I have remarked several very pretty women at his house.

Mr. Miller has a singular fund in reserve for daily conversation. During the time of the residence of the French princes at Holyrood, his partner gave some English lessons to the Duke D'Angouleme, and the Duke De Berri, who probably, on their departure, left him their portraits; at all events their portraits, carefully inclosed in their case, compose a portion of the furniture of the *boudoir*. The first day of my introduction to Messrs. Manners and Miller, the latter, after a short interval, drew the portraits from their case and shewed them to me, in order to attest their resemblance, before five or six beauties who were present. Every visit I paid him, he shewed them to me again, calling on me to say if they were not good likenesses; from my hands, the portraits passed into those of a lady, who for a moment quitted reading the *Edinburgh Review* in order to glance over them, and pass them to another, who in her turn

passed them to a third &c. &c. Let me in justice add that Messrs Manners and Miller are the most complaisant booksellers in the world, and deserve the eternal gratitude of strangers.

The coteries of Constable, Blackwood, Miller and Manners, are often associated by means of dinners and *soireés*, where every member brings his little *rôle*, which he enacts to the best of his power. But Edinburgh especially boasts a number of those ancient damsels, who being compelled for want of a fortune to renounce the conjugal state, delight in making themselves the centre of some free-thinking school. It is amusing to hear all the great questions of the day discussed in form at the residence of these Caledonian Du Deffants. By legitimate descent from father to son, the Scotch, have for a long time been the most obstinate disputers in religion, in science and in politics; there have always been two parties. The presbyterians of the present day are divided into two sects, the *moderates* and the *ultras;* the first under the conduct of Robertson, and now directed by Doctor Inglis; the last under that of Sir Henry Moncrief, successor to Dr. Erskine. The physicians at one time contended for Cullen and Brown, and now range themselves under the banners of Gregory or Hamilton. Under Hume there were the sceptics and anti-sceptics; under Adam Smith, three sects at least of economists; under Robertson, the partizans of Mary Stuart and her antagonists; under Macpherson, the Ossianists, and those who denied, and still

deny the antiquity of Ossian; the most recent dispute, according to the order of the day, has been that between the Plutonists and the Neptunians. The former, called also Huttonians, repeat with Hutton, Playfair, Hope, &c., that the formation of our globe is attributable to the action of central fire, which has consolidated the relics of a former world into rocks. One old dowager converted me the other day so completely to this view of the question, that it exacted last night from another a discussion of three-quarters of an hour in order to reconvert me to the theory of the Neptunians or Wernerians, who positively determine that the globe has been constructed by chemical precipitations or mechanical deposits from the chaotic fluid, which held all the mineral substances at once in solution! Thanks to Messrs. Thompson, Jameson, Brewster, and Macculloch, a man must be something of a chemist, physician, geologist or astronomer, in order to have his say in the greater part of the societies of Edinburgh. Still more fortunately, thanks to the imagination of Sir W. Scott, the capital of Scotland interests itself in its historical and poetical antiquities. It is even affirmed that music and dancing, during winter, frequently relieve the discussions on geology, philosophy, &c. The *eccentric* melody of a strathspey would put the most determined geologer and philosopher of Edinburgh into motion. The ladies of Edinburgh possess a more graceful deportment than those of London; they are at once slenderer, and less fragile. Up to the present time, I have

found among them fewer laughing Hebes, than haughty Junos, and stately-walking Dianas. They possess this feature in common with the beautiful statues of antiquity, that their frame is supported by a *broad sustaining* basis. There cannot be a doubt, however, that a less clumsy shoe would contribute to do away this exaggeration of the feet. If there be indeed a country where the young folks might advantageously adopt the fashion of the neat shoes worn by our fair Parisians, it is in a city like Edinburgh, where there is scarcely an apartment without carpet, and where every street is embellished with the broad and even flags of a double pavement.

To grace of figure the young ladies of Edinburgh add, for the most part, the charm of some agreeable talents. There are few of them who are not musicians, and who are deficient in extraordinary skill in the labours of the needle; there are few of them also unacquainted with French; and a teacher of that language has been named to me, who gets an income by his profession of from twenty to thirty thousand francs. The most numerous class in Edinburgh is that of the barristers and solicitors; and they give the tone to society. A young barrister of any little practice easily makes a good match; it is to such a one that Sir Walter Scott has given his eldest daughter. The barristers and signet writers, are the natural directors of the balls, routs, assemblies, dinners and public meetings. They edit the public journals, they set the

fashion, and lead public opinion; and, in fact, they often perform a very brilliant part in the novels of Sir Walter Scott. I enjoy double pleasure in perusing on the spot the conversations of Mr. Bartholomew Saddletree (in the *Heart of Midlothian.*)

LETTER LXXX.

TO M. DUMONT.

SMOLLETT, who has been named by Sir Walter Scott the Rubens of Novelists, and whose caricatures, often trite and degraded by buffoonery, are not deficient in truth, has sketched in his *Humphrey Clinker* a very amusing portrait of Lieutenant Lismahago. It is a model of Scotch character, which can be no longer applied to his countrymen without a malicious intention. But some features of the Caledonian Quixote are yet to be found in the Scotch physiognomy. All personal allusion apart, who has not laughed heartily at the lieutenant's fall from his horse, while engaged in paying his respects to the ladies? Who has not laughed at his anger, or his amours, couched in the national idiom, the full raciness of which he has carefully preserved during his American campaigns? What a dignity is there in his reply to Mr. Bramble, when the latter expresses

astonishment at his being able to undergo so many privations for three or four shillings a day; that he is a gentleman, and like a gentleman entered the service with the hopes and feelings of an honourable ambition; that he has no reason to complain, since he can always afford a clean shirt and a chop while he lives; and when he dies, will leave enough property to pay the expences of his funeral.

Mr. Bramble, however, soon finds a formidable champion in the warlike lieutenant. They discuss and fall into a hot dispute about the pros and cons of war, politics, belles lettres, jurisprudence, metaphysics, &c.

A chance word brings the genealogy of Mr. Bramble on the tapis. Lismahago listens to the detail of it with an almost respectful attention. Genealogy is up to the present day considered a matter of importance, even among the whigs of Edinburgh. The lieutenant then declines his *nomen* and prenomen, Obadiah Lismahago; writes them on a slip of paper, assists his hearers in pronouncing them correctly, emphatically declares, that more mellifluous names never existed, slides in some words about his ancestry with affected modesty, appears seduced by the compliments which Miss Tabitha applies to the Scotch nation generally, and only consents to a narrative of his adventures till he has decided on a politic reservation of part.

With what gravity he maintains that the best English is that which is spoken at Edinburgh; and that the English have done nothing but corrupt the purity of their language by their orthography

and pronunciation; that oaten flour is preferable to wheat; that commerce in the long run would be the ruin of the nation; that the liberty of the press was a national calamity, &c. &c. But I must pause; for our ministers might not be inclined to find the character of Lismahago so absurd as the author intended. Sometimes, when the lieutenant could not lay his hand on any other subject of contradiction, he treated his countrymen rather cavalierly, but he would never allow a sarcasm to be levelled at them by another.

In the same manner you may hear the readers of Blackwood launching their sneers at Jeffrey and Co. You may hear the whigs accuse Sir Walter Scott of being a servile politician. You must leave the entire matter to them, for no one else has any right to criticise either Jeffrey when he exhibits bad taste, or Sir Walter *quando bonus dormitat Homerus.*

If there be in Edinburgh some literary and political gossip, the reason is that Edinburgh is a provincial town notwithstanding its title of capital. Were you to convey the court there, it is probable that you would only have an additional *coterie* at Holyrood. If the spirit of discussion be perpetuated, it is doubtless assignable to the preponderating influence of the lawyers. Let us proceed to a survey of this powerful body. Walter Scott constitutes a part of it; and as I have already intimated, takes delight in introducing the ministers of chicanery into his novels.

A writer who has composed a treatise *ex professo*

on the subject of the incognito preserved by the author of *Waverley*, and who maintains that the poet of the *Lady of the Lake* and he of the Scotch novels is the same individual, partly founds his inference on the circumstance of both being lawyers. "The author of *Waverley*," he says, "describes the habits, eccentricities, and *bavardage** (jargon) of the trade, with a familiarity resulting from actual observation. Witness the lawyers of Gandergleuch, in the introduction to the *Heart of Midlothian*, and the more finished portrait of Paulus Pleydell, in Guy Mannering."

In short, none but a lawyer could impart interest to the judicial inquiries set on foot after the disappearance of little Bertram in Guy Mannering. None but a lawyer could have imagined the cross-examination of Sharpitlaw, Ratcliffe, and Madge Wildfire. None but a lawyer could have decided on sacrificing to the matter of fact of the profession the opportunity of being strikingly eloquent in the pleadings which he assigns to Effie's counsel. The whole trial of this unfortunate sister of the sublime Jeannie Deans is treated with a minuteness of technical details, and with a diffuseness which would spoil the effect of many a fine passage, however pathetic it might be in other respects.† One is sometimes tempted to quarrel with

* This word, begging pardon of the lawyers, is borrowed from the author referred to, who employs it as it stands, although it has its equivalent in English.

† I recommend to the French reader the various introductions to the romances of Sir Walter Scott. Some have been suppressed by M. De-

the novelist, on account of the impatience excited by the importunate remarks of the *judicial amateur* Saddletree. But at last we come to that tragical appeal (referring to the eloquence of maternal love) made by Master Fairbrother to the sympathizing judges, when interrupted by the piercing shriek of Effie. I have admired a similar point in one of the pleadings of Ferrere.*

The comic character of Paulus Pleydell is especially intended to familiarize us with the manners, *costumes*, and jargon of the old legal *corps* of Edinburgh. Some London critics pronounced it to be a coarse caricature; but in Scotland it was recognised as the faithful portraiture of local traditions. In Pleydell's time, the New Town was not in being: the nobility inhabited the little hotels of Canongate, and the lawyers the vast houses in the environs of the courts, called *lands*, of which each family occupied a story at the most. In order not to discourage the clients, who were forced to climb such a number of stairs, or to detach themselves from the ennui occasioned by these lofty *cages*, the *hommes d'affaires*, as they were then called, gave them a meeting at taverns, where some among them, in fact, constantly stationed their office, in the midst of porter pots and bottles.

The Paulus Pleydell of *Guy Mannering* was a

fauconfret, in the first editions; but they are re-established in the octavo. Some of these are really charming; such as those of the *Puritans* and the *Legends of Montrose*.

* A celebrated barrister of Bordeaux.

Mr. Crosbie, who shone for several years at the head of the Scotch bar; an honest, and, moreover, an able lawyer, residing in an alley called Allan Close, whence he regularly went every morning to the bar in his robe and wig. At present there are wardrobes, where the barristers, as at the *palais de justice* at Paris, change their *costume*. Mr. Crosbie readily settled his business with his clients and the solicitors at the John coffee-house, with a pint of brandy before him. On Saturday his rendezvous was another house called Anchor Close, described by the author of *Guy Mannering*, under the name of Clerihugh, where Mr. Crosbie used to club with some of his respectable brethren, and even with some judges, in a supper at 6d. per head. I presume the liquor was not comprised in this moderate charge, since the judicial Bacchanalians used to keep up the entertainment till the following morning.

Some scrupulous Englishmen have preserved at London a jesuitical habit, in order to avoid the temptation of violating the sabbath day. They indulge in long sittings at table, and elsewhere, on a Saturday, in order to be sufficiently fatigued for the Sunday, and so devote it to repose. I would lay a wager that the society for the suppression of vice would have nothing to say against such an expedient. I have elsewhere cited an anecdote on this subject.

The Driver of Paulus Pleydell is the portrait of a clerk equally well known, who, according to

the expression of his patron, found a substitute for every thing in ale. Ale was to him meat, drink, clothing, bed, and board.

Lord Gardenstone played Mr. Crosbie one of those tricks which amused the jovial bar of that time for a month. My lord met on the road a countryman going to Edinburgh, in order to hear Mr. Crosbie plead his cause. The facetious senator advised the plaintiff to procure himself a dozen or two of farthings at a tobaeconist's, in the Grass Market; to fold them carefully in white paper as if they were guineas; and remit them in the nick of time, in the form of fees, to Mr. Crosbie while pleading, in order to kindle his zeal. The case was a dry one. Mr. Crosbie occasionally flagged in his eloquence, and the tone of his voice indicated that he was about to cut short the argument, in order to bring the matter to a conclusion, without having sufficiently exhausted it. At each important crisis, when he began to lose breath, the crafty countryman silently slipped a farthing into his hand, and Mr. Crosbie was inspired with new spirit to return to the charge. At the fourteenth farthing, the jury were convinced, and the cause was gained. But at the John coffee house in the evening, the barrister regretted his great exertions, when he found his imaginary guineas reduced to farthings. Did Lord Gardenstone really play this trick on Master Crosbie, or did he merely relate it? No one troubled himself about that; but the whole bar laughed with all their hearts.

Paulus Pleydell's character, on the appearance of

Guy Mannering, particularly amused one of the judges of the quarter-sessions. That judge was Lord Hermand, a kind of judicial Cincinnatus, who was delighted to meet with so faithful a picture of the manners of the lawyers of the old school. It is even reported that while *Guy Mannering* was recently published, Lord Hermand always carried the novel about him like a manual, and was never tired of asking all he met, whether they had read it. One day, while seated on the bench with his judicial brethren, and gravely discussing some knotty question, Lord Hermand eagerly seized a word that dropped in order to appeal to *Guy Mannering*, and so warmly maintained its incontestible merit, that he finally drew a volume of it from his pocket, in order more effectually to demonstrate the legitimacy of his enthusiasm. His colleagues in vain remonstrated; he was determined to win the cause; and spouted a whole chapter with the most expressive tone and gesture. The pleasure of the lecture was contagious; and it is said that the judges demonstrated, by their attention and hearty laughter, that the Temple of Themis had never before resounded to so amusing a narrative. During the whole of the scene, the clerk, silently seated beneath Lord Hermand, listened like the rest. That clerk was the anonymous writer Sir W. Scott.

I have called Lord Hermand a judicial Cincinnatus; it is because he has preserved with his antique legal manners, the most vivid delight in rural pleasures. The vacations are devoted by him to

the cultivation of his dear Sabine farm. Formerly, such of the legal men as possessed any rural domain, hastened thither as soon as the Saturday's session was over, if they were not detained by some jovial rendezvous at the tavern. Accordingly, it was the custom on Saturdays to plead in *demi-costume*, and sometimes with the spurs on, in order to lose no time in riding away. The wig and the gown were the only paraphernalia rigorously retained. The modern Scotch barristers wear a lighter wardrobe, and the greater part of them plead with their hair dressed *a la Titus*; but the augmentation of the fees is what they more especially boast as a pledge of the improvements introduced by time into the State's well being. More than one pleader has contributed to the embellishments of Craig Crook, a pretty residence of Mr. Jeffrey, three miles from Edinburgh.*

I shall one day hazard a survey of the intricacies of the Scotch law. I will, at all events, say a few words of the peculiar composition of the Edinburgh courts of justice, in order to serve for commentary to certain entirely local expressions used in the novels of Sir W. Scott. At the court of sessions (a supreme court in civil matters) we find respectable judges and council, such as Messrs Moncrief, Forsyth and Cockburn, who constitute

* Since the writing of this letter, the novel of *Redgauntlet* has appeared, to supply us with new details about the solicitors and Scotch barristers of the old school. The Edinburgh pettifogger, poor Peter Peebles, is an historical personage.

I further appeal to the novel of *St. Ronan's Well* to justify my *scan-mag* of the literary coteries directed by *bas bleus*.

formidable rivals to Mr. Jeffrey, however skilful as a pleader, and eloquent as an orator, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review* may be. The Jury Court and the Court of Justiciary will occupy our attention after the Court of Session; from the hall of justice, I propose to make an excursion to the prison, which is not the old Tolbooth, as I have already said, but a modern edifice not far from the Calton Hill, and somewhat lugubrious in the monotony of its architecture.

I shall also detail in what the process of instruction consists for the law students; but I shall reserve such details till I take a review of the various colleges in the University, and probably, before I publish the result of my researches on this important subject, I shall find it expedient to wait till I have seen Glasgow, in order to compare the university of that second town of Scotland with that of the capital.

LETTER LXXXI.

TO M. AD. LESOURD.

Philosophy, the sciences, poetry, and criticism, have made greater progress in Scotland, than the fine arts in general. The Rev. Mr. Williams,

by his admirable water-pieces, Nasmyth, by his landscapes, Raeburn, by his portraits, Wilkie, Allan, and other artists of merit, may be said to have founded a Scotch school in painting. But I have not yet met with Scotch sculptors; the statues which adorn the Parliament House are by Chantry; perhaps between my visits to Edinburgh and Glasgow, I may have occasion to correct my present opinion. A Mr. Adams pretends to great merit in architecture here; and I, for his credit, hope that Edinburgh is not indebted to him for the heavy turret dedicated as a mausoleum to Hume, the truncated column of Nelson, the chapel in the form of an inverted pipkin, the theatre, and twenty other monuments more inelegant still, appertaining to a city, the site of which alone ought to have inspired a true taste in architecture. Seen at a distance, every thing here is grand and picturesque; but on a closer view, all is diminutive, or in degraded taste. The environs of Edinburgh are also deficient in trees. Might it not have been possible to have approximated some of the firs which invest the uplands of Costorphine, or of the elms and oaks of Dalkeith, the foliage of which would have begirt with a verdant zone, the sterile eminences on which the modern Athens is erected? There is something more refreshing to the eye in the pretty valley situated to the west of the town, and I have occasionally taken pleasure in following the irregular course of the Leith Water, which issuing from the Pentland Hills, proceeds to discharge itself in the Firth of Forth in the middle of

Leith. This wandering stream sometimes seems to force a difficult passage across rocks, which conceal its course with their prominences; sometimes it carelessly overleaps them in cascades, and subsequently running on a more level surface, it refreshes a series of meads or tufted trees. Towards the middle of the valley spouts up another spring, which would have mingled with the Leith Water, in order to bear its playful tribute so accompanied to the Frith of Forth; but it was found to possess medicinal virtues, and has consequently been confined to a reservoir surrounded by a little temple with projecting pillars. One would naturally expect to find in this rotunda, (called Bernard's Well,) the elegant statue of some romantic Naiad, calculated to excite reminiscences of the *Lady of the Lake*, or at least some Grecian Hebe, worthy of the modern Athens. But one is shocked at the sight of a coarsely-sculptured Colossus, which is intended to represent the Goddess Hygeia.

Greater advantage might also have been taken of the site of Calton Hill, around which are traced winding paths, conducting to the pharos of Nelson. It is true that this hill awaits the designed embellishment of another monument, about to result from a national subscription: it is to be an exact counterpart of the Parthenon of Athens.

From Calton Hill, let us re-descend towards Princes-street. Here we find the Register Office, cited as the *chef d'œuvre* of Mr. Adams. This edifice, not otherwise deficient in merit, is disfigured by a flight of steps, the ingenious invention of

which, however, is made a subject of eulogium. On arriving at the base of the *façade*, you must either turn to the right or to the left, in order to ascend the staircase leading to the entrance. The principal access has therefore been condemned, and I have never entered this public building otherwise than laterally; indeed it will not bear comparison with many plebeian residences which we pass unnoticed in Paris. Almost facing the Register-office is the theatre; and here it is that Edinburgh is obliged to submit to the humiliating epithet of *provincial*. In order to mark the poverty of this playhouse (the term *house* is here rigorously applicable) an effort has been made to dignify it with a portico; an effort, alas, which is quite in harmony with the rest of this temple of the dramatic muses. There is nothing, however, displeasing in the aspect of the interior; it may, indeed, be called tolerably pretty for a provincial theatre. The first time I entered it was for the purpose of hearing the grand musical contest of the bagpipe players. I had expressed to our consul, M. Hugo, a desire to be present at the spectacle, and I was compelled to employ all the importunity of my curiosity in order to resist his recommendations to have nothing to do with it. "Put no faith in ought that bears the name of music, while you are in Scotland," he said; "you have not a fiddler in France who would not make a Rossini at Edinburgh. In my character of consul, it is my duty to protect the subjects of his most christian majesty against all delusive pretences. I was taken in on

my first arrival, and all you have to do, is to profit by my experience. I was asked to a private concert; I suffered the infliction of several airs with exemplary patience. My host asked me if I were not enchanted. 'Very much,' I replied, 'but I like a little more variety; those mournful ditties shake my nerves.'—'What mournful ditties! they are nuptial airs.' You may conceive how mortified I was, as well as my entertainer: I thought I was listening to funeral chaunts; as to bagpipes, they positively put me to the rack. You will return deaf from such a concert."

I nevertheless persisted, and attended the contest of pipers, leaving the philosopher and the consul to deplore the obstinacy of my curiosity.* During the first quarter of an hour, I thought the consul was in the right. But in order that the national pride of Scotland may estimate at its just value my judgment, I must preface that I am a complete barbarian with respect to music, and as incapable of analyzing the natural air which charms me, as the artificial air which astonishes me. I am

* The prejudices of the consul, who is otherwise a man of wit, but who appears to consider himself as in a state of exile in Edinburgh, have caused him to entertain a kind of spite against C. Nodier, who has depicted Royal Edina in such poetic colours. M. C. Nodier and his friends, said he, arrived here one Sunday morning. They had the misfortune to lose almost all their hats on the way; they had only one remaining among four. The observation of the Sabbath is so strict in Edinburgh, that they could not get any hatter to open shop till late in the day; and, in order to lose no time, each of the party, in his turn, wore the preserved hat, and took a solitary walk through the town.

Charles Nodier and Taylor have laughed heartily with me at this anecdote, which they admitted was not without some colour of truth.

indebted to music for vivid emotions; Paesiello, Cimarosa, Mozart, Rossini, &c. appear to me like demi-gods, when the orchestra of Louvois, or the notes of Mainville, are employed to interpret their inspirations: they move, they transport, they excite me; but I am not ashamed of smiling with pleasure, or weeping with emotion, when an artless air, sung by some village girl, chances to interrupt the silence of some bowery shade, where I wander as hazard leads. Sometimes, even when alone, at the fireside, with my pen in my hand, I suddenly break off a letter I am writing, or an author whom I am perusing, in order to listen to the notes of a spinnet under my window.

I repeat that I am a barbarian; nature has even refused me the boon of a correct accent, and if I attempt to hum a tune which has affected or pleased me, I am myself alarmed at the discord which escapes my lips. I, nevertheless, love music, and I might not inappositely compare myself, like some English poet whose name I forget, to a nightingale endowed in a superior manner with a musical instinct, but whom some cruel fowler has deprived of its tongue.

The pit was full of the audience, who seemed to enjoy by anticipation, the earnest of an entirely national festival. The pipers, who bore a part in this ceremony, came from different quarters of the Highlands, all wearing the antique costume of their several clans. Each advanced in his turn on the stage, with a lofty air, which recalled to mind that the piper was formerly one of the

principal hereditary officers of the *tail* or suite of the chief. The first performed, marching while he played, one of those airs which may be said to compose a part of the historical tradition of certain exploits connected with some clan, or the localities of their habitation. A second succeeded, and played in the same spirit; then a third and fourth, &c. &c. There were not a few who accompanied the motion of their bags with an almost convulsive motion of their body. I perceived that the airs were not the same; but there is so little variety in the shrill tones of the instrument, the extent of its gamut is so limited, that I can readily allow for the belief of some travellers, that a single and the same air was executed by all the competitors. The emotions expressed by the countenances, and applauses of the judges, guided me as much as my ear in distinguishing the difference between the *Pibroch*, a kind of variations or warlike marches, and the *Coronach*, or dirges, and the *Reels* or dancing tunes. It sometimes seemed to me, that the barbarous scream of the bagpipe protracted itself beyond the intention of the player, and that the prolonged echo of one note, clashed with the ensuing note, in spite of the interval which separates them in the gamut. But a music of this kind would, even to a stranger, inspire other feelings among the sombre caves of the mountains, or on the sea coast amidst the howling of the waves.

The Gaelic bagpipe differs from the *musette* of our provinces, more in its form than in its tone.

It has only one pipe and three drones; the pipe is pierced with eight holes, seven before and one behind. The imperfect gamut is only composed of five notes. By the deficiency of the fourth and seventh, the most common airs have but one tone, and are very poor in modulations.*

A bagpipe, a claymore, and a complete Highland costume, were the reward of the victor.

This annual concert is held under the auspices of the Highland Society, which also gives charming balls to the Edinburgh ladies; and as they are as fond of dancing as of music and literature, the Highland Society is very popular here. Its serious intention is the research of national antiquities, in concurrence with that of the Society of Antiquarians. Valuable information has been supplied by it on the subject of the poems of Ossian, about which, however, little question is at present mooted.

The music of the Scotch lowlands recedes every

* A more scientific author than myself, and who thinks that the music of the Chinese resembles that of the Gaels, says, that five notes of the Scotch gamut represent the tone of *ut* natural, *ut re mi fa* and *sol, la*. These five notes and their octaves, he adds, produce a variety of different combinations, and serve to form particular airs, which all have a basis of resemblance. It appears that the object has been to compensate for the poverty of the tune, by the diversity of the rhythm; and that in fact, it has been found necessary, in order to mark the time of the measure, to employ signs much more varied than those of our music. The fourth and seventh note, are nevertheless found in some Gaelic airs, which are doubtless more modern and now divested of barbarism. It would seem as if the singer avoided resting on these notes, which are only a kind of transition notes, and almost all syncoped, instead of composing an integral part of the melody. See the work of M. Neckar de Saussure on Scotch music; Blair's Dissertation; that of an Anonymous Author, &c. &c.

day more and more from that of the highlands: but it preserves in the midst of all its modifications, a greater tendency towards the plaintive expressions of sorrow, than the buoyant cadences of joy. Generally speaking, the music of the three kingdoms has no really gay airs, but such as are adapted to silly words, and burdens without rhyme or reason, like the *flon flon, ta ta,* and the *landerirette* of our national songs. Accordingly, the pangs of love, or the sublime melancholy which the lugubrious aspect of nature in a gloomy climate inspires, and the mourning weeds of a country bewailing its lost independence, its ancient kings, and its heroes, &c., are probably better expressed by Burns, in his ballads, than the differently-accented language of anacreontic gaiety. Those, who, at the Gymnase, have heard Perlet parody Burns' song,

"A highland lad my love was born," &c.

would find some difficulty in believing that Haydn, Mozart, Pleyel, &c. introduced several Scotch ballads into their compositions; but they have really done so, and that successfully, as Ross has done since. The Scotch are proud of this distinction. They self-complacently repeat that David Rizzio, the friend of Mary Stuart, perfected their music. Others maintain that James I., who reigned in the fifteenth century, was the creator of the art in Scotland. This prince introduced organs and choirs into the cathedrals. He loved to play on the harp, an instrument formerly as natural here

as the bagpipes. In fine, according to other authorities, the Scotch music was early adopted in Italy, and it is its alliance with the Italian which imparts to the latter its incontestible superiority over all known music. This is a seriously entertained opinion, and I state the circumstance, for fear it should be thought that I borrow it from Captain Lismahago.

While instituting researches into the character of the genius of the immortal Burns, I hope to be enabled to acquire more precise notions of Scotch music, as associated with its poetry. The poetical song or ballad, is an important branch of Scotch literature; in Scotland, more than elsewhere, it is the echo of popular character, because the ballad makers have never abstracted their eyes from their native mountains, in order to invoke the Greek Olympus and Parnassus. Each locality in this country has its tradition, its worship, and its ballad. The collection of *Border Songs*, made by Sir W. Scott, is a poetical commentary on the *History of Scotland.* The songs of the Highlands possess too much analogy with those of the Lowlands, to escape embarrassing such as wish to connect them with the pretended poems of Ossian. I should be more inclined to yield credit to the authenticity of the Ossianic literature, such as Macpherson has transmitted it, if the art of printing alone had been its preserver: the real songs of oral tradition, exhibit so different a physiognomy. But this is not the proper place to revive a discussion occasioned by the pheno-

menon of three epic poems, depicting manners either forgotten, or invented by a modern. The true Gaelic songs, like those of the Lowlands, the songs of Burns, and those of Sir Walter Scott, exhibit nothing of an Ossianic character. Those exclusively national airs, do not, nevertheless, lose their privilege of disputing the palm in the drawing-rooms of Edinburgh, with the airs of Rossini, which are the vogue on this side the Tweed as well as the other. I have observed the songs of Burns to electrify a society, which had only derived a factitious enthusiasm from the most scientific sonatas. This is the peculiar privilege of all that is really national.

There is an observation to be made, which I consider just, but which a Scotchman will not readily acknowledge; these love songs serve as an antidote to that spirit of puritanism, which tends to the diffusion of a funeral veil over every Scotch physiognomy. The inquisitorial tyranny exercised in Scotland by the presbyterian clergy, would condemn all the Scotch without exception to the austerity of Davie Deans, (*Heart of Midlothian.*) The somewhat profane songs of Burn, do not, however, undermine morals, like the sonnets of Moore; but they constitute a puissant ally of dancing like them proscribed by the General Assembly. Poor Effie Deans, your father was, nevertheless, in the right! but all the daughters of Scotland, without having the prudence of Jeannie, are not seduced by George Robertsons.

LETTER LXXXII.

ALTHOUGH few poets have, during life, enjoyed so great a popularity as that of Sir Walter Scott; although his works are, if not entire, at least in separate volumes, to be found in all the houses of Edinburgh; although his name, familiar with all, is associated with all that is national in Edinburgh, Sir Walter Scott, in default of rivals, has his maligners and detractors. The whigs reproach him, some with imparting the false colouring of fancy to the tyranny of the Stuarts, others with always siding with the powers that be; the ardent and sombre presbyterians impute it to him as a crime, that he has slandered the founders of their church, through an affectation of impartiality. With some, Scott is a ministerial anti-liberal; with others a freethinker in matters of religion. It is pretended, that if the *Review* were not published under the auspices of his bookseller, Constable, the Aristarchuses of Scotland would have been less enthusiastical in their eulogiums, and more bitter in their censures on the man who has restored Scotland to the rank of nations, by continually occupying Europe with the subject of independent Scotland. In fact, his poems, like his

novels, compose poetical protests against the act of union; and of all flatteries, this is the one most calculated to humour the national pride; accordingly, the grateful public sympathize with the glory of Scott, as if it were their own. His appearance in a public place excites an approving murmur round him, and at the theatre unanimous applauses have more than once burst forth, to do honour to the poet of Scotland. This kind of suffrage is sufficient to console him for the buzzing of some literary and political insects; through good or evil report his name is that which is most often pronounced in his country, and that which foreigners are in a more especial manner interested in meeting there.

If I had not been assured that Sir Walter Scott was as remarkable for his affability as for his talent, I do not know how I should have been able to surmount my natural timidity in introducing myself to him. It is true, that I indulged in the fancy that I possessed some exclusive titles to his attention, and that a sort of intellectual commerce already existed between us; but even these credentials were occasionally matters of greater discouragement. The Italian proverb, of *Traduttore Traditore* came to my mind. Was it not an unpardonable act of presumption in me, to have caused *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake* to speak in prose? And did that prose, rapidly thrown off in short moments of leisure, deserve to furnish me with a title of introduction? I had,

nevertheless, no other, in yielding implicit credit to my friends, who had persuaded me that they were sufficient. At length I made up my mind: for to return without having seen Sir Walter Scott, was to fail in accomplishing the chief object of my journey. I was invited to breakfast in the morning with the wise and amiable Professor Thomson. At nine, I directed my way along the magnificent terraces of George-street, bounded at one extremity by the elegant column of Lord Melville, and on the other by the church of St. George, which might have been a more faithful copy of St. Paul's, London. Approaching this edifice, Castle-street opens to the right and left in George-street; to the left arises in imposing serenity, the old citadel, which the eye frequently encounters in Edinburgh; and on the right is seen the sea, the fluctuating azure of which still more frequently salutes the view from various quarters, notwithstanding the new houses which daily join the ranks of buildings protracting their lines from the end of the New Town, as far as the shore. It is in this eminently picturesque street (Castle-street), on the sea side, thar Sir Walter Scott's house stands. I ascended the steps of the exterior door, in some trepidation, and pulled the bell, as I read on the plate of the knocker, the name and title of the poet,—Sir Walter Scott, Baronet. The door is opened: Sir Walter is at home.

I might, after Tristram Shandy's manner, retain you in the passage to draw your attention to the

cleanliness of the house; the livery of blue turned up with yellow of the powdered lacquey, announcing affluence; but I did not remark these *minutiæ* till afterwards; and in the sitting room, to which I was introduced, I beheld nothing but the individual, in a morning dress, who was seated at his desk. This was Sir W. Scott; he rose, approached me, and with graceful unaffectedness took, and opened the note, in which his friend Laing, the bookseller, told him in six lines, that a young French doctor (naming me) desired the pleasure of an introduction, in order to present him a copy of some of his poems which he had translated. You will naturally think that, although so short a note was soon read, I had time to study all the features, and play of the physiognomy of Sir Walter. Whether it was that I fancied him to appear pleased with my homage, or that when I had before met him, the fatigue of walking, perspiration, and dust, had somewhat altered his countenance, it now appeared to me, that his tranquil cast of head possessed all the majesty which Chantry's bust has developed; and when, with a polite smile, he requested me to take a chair, that smile displayed a charming amenity. "It seems, Sir," said he, "that I am under obligations to you. I consider it as an honour to be not unknown as a poet in France."

"You are known, loved, and admired there," I replied; "but the cause is, also, because you are read there in your native tongue. My feeble

translation may have enabled some readers to comprehend you, and supply some guess of your qualities to others; but it is little worthy of you; if, however, you will do me the honour of accepting it as a tribute, I should feel great pleasure in presenting it."

Sir W. Scott.—"I will accept it with thanks. It will, besides, give pleasure to Lady Scott. Permit me to introduce you to her; and do us the honour of breakfasting with us."

"I am sorry I cannot, being previously engaged at Professor Thomson's."

Sir W. S.—"You must come again, then, and give us our turn. Do you intend to make any stay in Scotland?"

"From six weeks to two months; one of the objects of my voyage is already accomplished, since I have seen *your own romantic town*, and its poet; but I am curious to visit the greater part of the places he has celebrated;

> 'From lone Glenartney's hazel shade,
> E'en to the path of Bealmaha.'"

Sir W. Scott.—"You already are familiar with the names of our country."

"*The Lady of the Lake* has taught them to Europe. I propose to follow the itinerary of that poem; but if you would have the goodness to give me any additional instructions, I should be happy to receive them."

Here Sir Walter Scott briefly described to me

the principal localities in Perthshire. A servant came to deliver a message, and he went out for a few minutes, requesting me to wait. I took advantage of the interruption, to cast my eye over the furniture of his closet, and my eyes were for some time rivetted on a skull placed on the mantelpiece. I did not know at first whether it was a natural skull, or a well executed cast, and I was going to survey it in my anatomical capacity when the poet returned, and remarking the still mute expression of my curiosity, he was the first to say; "that is a model of the head of Robert Bruce, one of the heroes of Scotland." And while pronouncing these words before a stranger, Sir Walter Scott suffered an emotion of enthusiasm to appear in his glance; so it seemed at least to me; he continued: "The name of Bruce, and that of Wallace, have a magic influence in this country, they are the demi-gods of our heroic ages; their memory restores to us the pride of independent Scotland. They are not only the heroes of our saloons, but the heroes of the populace. Ballads compose the greatest part of Scotch literature, and those ballads sing of Wallace and Robert Bruce. A poet sprung from the ranks of the people, Robert Burns, has also sung of Wallace and Bruce, at the conclusion of the last century. You can scarcely conceive what an æra it was for us, to have discovered some few years ago, the tomb and mortal relics of Bruce: to that discovery it is that I am indebted for this cast. It occurred in 1818, in digging the foundation for a new

church at Dunfermline. A tomb was found, the situation of which perfectly corresponded with that which our two ancient Chroniclers, Barbour and Fordun, describe. It was closed by iron hoops, almost all rust eaten; the lead was worn away in several places, and the remains of a skeleton were then discovered, which had appertained to a man of six feet two inches in height."

"The height of the heroes of Homer."

Sir Walter Scott smiled at my observation, and added, "The body had been wrapped in damask cloth of very fine tissue, interwoven with gold, of which some of the fragments remain. On the head were the remains of something, which must have been a crown; an interior coffin of oak was immediately next to the body; but the wood was worm-eaten; some nails were drawn out of it: here and there were scattered fragments of marble, which had doubtless composed a part of the mausoleum. Like many others, I made a pilgrimage to this tomb. We all respectfully contemplated the relics of King Robert Bruce."

"You had already published the *Lord of the Isles?*"

Sir Walter Scott.—"Yes, the poem dates from 1813."

"It is one of your poems which has most interested me; the description of the Hebrides is a savage but sublime picture."

Sir Walter Scott.—"I am greatly indebted to

our old poet Barbour, for the historical events of the work."

"You have revivified the heroic chronicles of your country: you have restored to the heraldic blazonry of the descendants of your ancient knights all the lustre with which it glittered in the age of chivalry. But complaints are made of your silence. Your dramatic sketch of *Halidon Hill* is another national work; but we should have been pleased with seeing it of greater length. You have not renounced the intention of giving us another poem?"

Sir W. S.—"I do not know. I have published a great many."

"We also admire your *prose*."

This was touching a delicate chord; but I had made up my mind not to speak of the novels, for fear of being led into any indiscretion; I therefore quickly added, "I had thought of translating your *Life of Swift*; I am sure that it would succeed in France."

Sir W. S.—"In my opinion you would find your account in publishing the *Life of Dryden* first. It comprises a subject more generally agreeable."

"I am familiar with that * also; and have perused it with pleasure and profit. In that work you have given the literary history of half a century. On receiving the book, I perceived, on re-

* I find that I have been anticipated, as well as in that of Dryden.

ferring to the index, the name of Moliere, and I anxiously sought the passage in which you do justice to his genius."

Sir W. S.—"Both Moliere and Dryden imitated Plautus's *Amphytrion*. Dryden had the double advantage of imitating Moliere as well as Plautus. By the way, the Latin poet is the least faithful of the three to the rules of unity of place.* Hercules is born in the Latin production; while the two moderns have contented themselves with preparing for his birth nine months before hand."

"Our French Aristotles look upon Plautus as a barbarian. It was to him that R. Boileau alluded.

'Le Latin dans les mots brave l'honnêteté.'"

Sir W. S.—"Dryden also is disposed to set it at defiance. He quotes somewhere a passage of Montaigne,* with reference to French delicacy. In his time the decency of the French Theatre ought to have shamed ours. Moliere's *Amphytrion* is a model of true comedy. Dryden is generally trite and coarse, when Moliere is witty. If Moliere hazards a *double entendre*, Dryden tells the same thing in rounds terms."

"Dryden is a poet in the part of Jupiter."

Sir W. S.—"Yes; and he has enriched his *Amphytrion* with a secondary intrigue, which Mo-

* We are made up of ceremonial. Ceremony carries us away, and we quit the substance of things. We have taught the ladies to blush at only hearing named what they never scruple to do. We dare to call the members of our body by their proper names, while we fear not to employ them in all kinds of debauchery.

liere need not have disavowed,—the intrigue between Mercury and Phedra, the wife of Sosia. But he acknowledged Moliere for his master."

"He was less just to Racine, and one cannot avoid inclining to his opinion when he ridicules the extreme scrupulosity of *Monsieur Hippolyte* in not daring to accuse his *marâtre* (step mother)."*

Sir W. S.—"I have given no judgment on this incident, which I have called a knotty point; but quoted Racine's verses to give my readers an opportunity of judging for themselves."

"But in another place you attribute the rhodamontades of Dryden's heroes to his imitation of the French tragedies."

Sir W. S.—"The rhyming tragedies or heroic performances of Dryden were importations from the Parisian theatre. In France during Louis XIV.'s time, a kind of pompous ceremony, contradistinguished from the manners of the people, took possession of the theatre; the poets troubled themselves less about making their personages speak naturally, than avoiding the violation of the law of decorum imposed by the presence of the Grand Monarque. The sentiments were borrowed from Calprenede and Scudery. The etiquette of the

* An expression of Dryden.

"*Aricie.*

Pour quoi? par quelle caprice.
Laissez vous le champ libre a votre accusatrice?
Ecclaircissez Theseo.

Hippolyte.

He! Que na'i je point dit?
Ai je dû mettre au jour l'opprobre de son lit?" &c.

court presided over the dialogue. The great talents of Corneille and Racine corrected many of the absurdities in this system; but the plan was fallacious, and their poetry unfortunately accustomed their countrymen to a style which, had it not been for them, would have fallen into contempt."

"We have in France our literary prejudices as the English have theirs; but we nevertheless yield more and more to the influence of new ideas. The dramatic art is still in arrear as to matters of innovation; but it will also in turn be disposed to make concessions. A great revolution has taken place in our literature; to this you have contributed; but we have also our great man in the literary world, who is now in London."

Sir W. S.—"Viscount Chateaubriand?"

"He represents both Political and Literary France."

I could have wished that Sir Walter Scott had added something to the name of the most illustrious of our writers; but the name only supplied him with an occasion for referring to another,—that of a female more known and praised in England, because she has incorporated herself more with the opinions of the English in politics as in literature. He remarked—

Sir W. S.—"We have the Baron de Staël here; and he has done me the honour to come and see me. Do you know him?"

"I have sometimes seen him at the house of M. Guizot, one of our publicists, who is most

profound in his profession, and deeply versed in modern literature."

Sir Walter Scott.—"And have you been acquainted with Madame de Staël?"

"I was very young when she was pointed out to me at a party; but a great many persons were round her. I scarcely heard, and comprehended two of her remarks."

Sir W. S.—"It is said that she was astonishing in her conversation,—more astonishing than in her works, where she often thinks and writes like a man."

"I have heard the charm of her drawing-room *improvisations* boasted by Madame Guizot."

Sir W. S.—"She constituted a power in the literary world. Her son appeared to me a remarkable man; he speaks English with a degree of perfection for a stranger. Has not Madame de Staël also left a daughter?"

"Yes; and she is a lady of great talent, who has married the Duke De Broglia, one of the chiefs of our opposition in the chamber of peers."

Sir W. S.—"Politics occupy you greatly in France, and absorb all your talents."

"They have abstracted some from literature, properly so called; but they have imparted to their character a loftier and more serious purpose. You have paid a visit to Paris?"

Sir W. S.—"Yes, in 1815; but I saw very little of France. I should not have desired to see it through the cloud of foreign arms with which it was covered. Every foreigner must have ap-

peared like an enemy; every family kept itself aloof. I visited more English and Germans at Paris than Frenchmen."

"Do you propose returning there?"

Sir W. S.—"I am afraid it is not probable."

"Your name was not known to a hundred persons at that epoch! It is now a name as much known and beloved as those of our favourite authors."

Sir W. Scott modestly smiled.

"Your *Paul's Letters*," I continued, "are not sufficient for us. Your observations on France have, however, been considered tolerably impartial by impartial Frenchmen. But we hope to be better known by you, and more correctly appreciated."

I had often heard *Paul's Letters*, by Sir Walter Scott, quoted as a tissue of calumnies against France. Some journals have been eager to brand them with this reputation; and many persons have sat down contented with this ready cut and dry opinion, without taking the trouble to read for themselves. To say that this work is true in all its details is foreign to my intention; many things superficially seen have led the author into erroneous conclusions. There are also prejudices appertaining to the Englishman and the Tory, from which it has been out of his power to emancipate himself during his short stay amongst us. But he does justice to more than one French virtue, while so many of his countrymen do not allow us the possession of one. Nations are like

great babies which require to be flattered, English travellers have not spoiled us in that particular; and comparatively Paul has conceded to us a tolerably fair portion of his esteem. We must not forget that he belongs to a rival and inimical nation, and we shall not then find him so severe. *Paul's Letters* have also been confounded with a *Visit to Paris in* 1815, by Mr. John Scott, an impudent calumniator, who was afterwards killed in a duel growing out of a quarrel between him and Mr. Lockhart, Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law.

I return to our conversation.

Sir Walter repeated to me that he did not think he should be able to make an early voyage to France. He added some polite questions concerning myself. I did not prolong my first visit any farther, and proceeded to the house of Professor Thomson.

In reporting this and the following conversations, I am bound in candour to confess that I make use of my notes taken on the day of my visits, and that I suppress more than I add. But in committing them to paper, I have been anxious to have recourse to the printed opinions of Sir Walter Scott, in order to be more sure of my memory, and not to put any thing in his mouth which might give occasion for disavowal. In order to secure correctness wherever my notes were imperfect, through over-abridgement, I have preferred omitting them altogether. I may perhaps have rounded some phrase, but without altering it, and for the sake of supplying the emphasis of

conversation, which cannot often be rendered, except by an additional epithet, or a second explanatory phrase.

P. S. I may as well add in this place, with reference to the head of Robert Bruce, that it has seriously occupied the phrenological societies of Scotland.* A Mr. William Scott has published, in the transactions of one of these societies, a memoir on the analogies that existed between the character of the famous King Robert and the development of his cerebral organs. He has detected all the protuberances indicative of his life, and of each of his exploits.

LETTER LXXXIII.

TO MR. FRED. L'AB.

Since I have seen Sir Walter Scott, it appears to me that no one can occupy his attention with any thing else but him in his native town; but I vainly pronounced his name to several persons whom I met in the streets, or to whom I paid visits. Public attention had for several days been taken up with a still greater personage. The worthy li-

* Dr. Spurzheim and his system have had great success in Scotland. I shall have occasion to speak of them in my work on the medical practice, the physicians, the medical societies, &c. of Great Britain.

brarian, Mr. Laing, after having asked me the same question as he asked me the following day, and the day following that; "*Have you seen the chevalier?*" made a rapid transition to the subject which occupied all the thoughts of the Scotch,—the approaching visit of the King. Our landlord of the Black Bull apprized us that our apartments, considering the influx of strangers, must cost us for the future two guineas a day. But without saying any thing, we sought and found an apartment in the town, which the worthy hostess, who seemed bent on not taking advantage of our circumstances, let to us, almost against our protest, for two guineas a week. In wandering from house to house till we reached that of this unparalleled hostess, we traversed a great portion of the town. After dinner we went to the theatre, in order to rest ourselves on the benches of the pit. We shall probably find something of Sir Walter Scott, thought I. The play bill announced *Rob Roy*.

I have before remarked that the theatre was merely that of a provincial town, but we must not literally apply to its actors the verses which Dryden applies to such gentry in his epilogue to the *Deserter*. In that Dryden ridiculed a detachment from a troop of strolling players, the better portion of which was to be found at Oxford.

The principal actress at Edinburgh, Mrs. Siddons, bears a name difficult to sustain; but she sometimes sustains it well. She is endowed with grace, dignity, and much susceptibility. Mr. Murray represents the English officer in *Rob Roy*

well; but the illusion is complete when the actor Mackay is on the stage; that actor is the Baillie Jarvie himself, with his mistrust, and his *bonhomie*, his plebeian generosity, and all his provincialisms of accent and manner. Next to the Baillie, the *creature* Dougal, a personage eminently local, is almost as comical a character on the stage as in the romance; but the Rob Roy of Edinburgh will not bear competition with that of Macready, whom I have seen so energetically express at Covent Garden, the various sentiments which alternately agitate the bosom of that outlaw chief in the prison of Glasgow, or on the shores of Loch Katrine.

The scenic decorations of *Rob Roy* cannot fail of being faithful pictures on a stage so close to the little kingdom of Macgregor: they are fine; but I shall not stop to describe them. In fifteen days we shall be enabled, from the eminences of Ben Lomond, to command all the localities which the *Lady of the Lake* has rendered classical, like the mountains and vallies of Switzerland. These localities were conjured up where we sat, as if by magic; for at the moment that the curtain drew up, the gas, by which at other times the theatre is so perfectly illuminated, that the most distant spectators may converse with the eyes and lips, suddenly failing in the reservoirs, left us void of its radiant enlightenment. A general murmur of surprise arose; but the darkness with which we were enveloped was happily "the darkness visible" of Milton; and in order to sooth the impatience of the public during the intervening

quarter of an hour, the orchestra played those airs called strathspeys, which occasion unaffected delight in Scotland. Under the veil of the theatrical twilight several choruses from the boxes and the pit joyously chimed in with the strains of the national music, till at length the chandelier and the stage lamps again illuminated the house with their sudden radiance.

I have already stated how aukwardly the dramas borrowed from the romantic narratives of the author of *Rob Roy* are got up. Notwithstanding all the truth alleged respecting the difficulty of extracting a good theatrical piece from a good romance, it seems to me, while re-perusing on the spot these dramatic romances, that they contain all the elements of true tragedies and comedies, calculated to regenerate both the English and the French stage. I would point out to any friend who wanted a subject, that of a piece which might constitute an excellent appendage to *Pinto* and *William Tell.* It would compose a drama, generally more serious, but which would not possess the less animation and variety,—that of *Old Mortality.* It would be requisite perhaps to discard a little of the law of the unity of place for the development of it; but what a development! The first scenes should pass in the inn of Niel the Piper. Niel would give his instructions to his daughter. The dialogue is entirely constructed to hand. Moliere would have scarcely changed a word. The incidents of Wappenshaw might be added in the form of narrative; and the narrator might therein cha-

racterise some of the personages who are subsequently to make their appearance; young Morton, with his mirthful rivals in the birdbolting scene; Brigadier Bothwell with his detachment, and the gloomy Burley placing himself in one corner. The insolence of the Dragoons should be made to interrupt the carouse; Burley should drink with a sinister and prophetic air the health of the Archbishop of St. Andrew's; Morton would generously take the side of the oppressed; the wrestling contest between Bothwell and the fanatical puritan would follow as a prelude to that final death struggle destined one day to leave breathless on the ground the soldier king-descended, on whom are found those love letters and verses which render him so interesting. Morton and Burley next retire; the dragoon officer enters, and announces the murder of the Primate. Suspicions instantly fall on the ferocious Unknown, who so effectually replied to the defiance of the dragoon. This is the signal for a succession of grand events; parties and opinions assume a menacing air. The curtain falls, and on its rising we are conveyed to the castle of the old miser Milnwood. We are now to become acquainted with that Harpagon whom Moliere would himself acknowledge was worthy of competing with his own. Who will not laugh at the airs of the servant-mistress of the worthy Alison? While we deplore the dependance and humiliations of the nephew of Milnwood, we are bound to esteem him for respecting his uncle in his follies as well as in his wrongs;

although he is under no obligations to him. The son of Harpagon ridicules his father; that was a true characteristic of the manners of the age; and we find associated with other manners another relative truth. Cuddy and his mother are already established in the family of Milnwood; for we are impatient for the production of the scene where the dragoons come to make their search, and carry away Morton, and his *protegès* as prisoners. Here then must be another violation of the unity of place; but it will be easily pardoned when it occurs for the sake of introducing personages so true and so original, as those which expect us at Tillietudlem. Lady Bellenden will apprize us of her devotion to the royal cause and of the grand day when his majesty King Charles deigned to partake of a breakfast at her house. Major Bellenden will entertain us with his campaigns, and Lord Evandale deport himself like a generous rival. Claverhouse, brave as an antient knight, polished as a courtier, cruel as the head of a faction, will interest us by his strikingly epic character. My friend became enthusiastic in favour of these characters, some good and noble; others purely comic. He prepares to transport us into the camp of the rebels under the walls of Tillietudlem; and calculates on great effect for his last act from the scene, where, after the unhappy affair of Bothwell bridge, Morton is about to be sacrificed as a traitor. Nor will he forget to employ the discourse of the fanatical preacher, who rushes towards the bell in order to hasten

the hour of punishment while he compares himself to Joshua arresting the course of the sun. But alas! unfortunate reflection, before the third act, perhaps from the commencement of the first scenes, the fear of political allusion compels my friend to close the book, and he reproaches me with having suggested a subject, which would be returned to him scored in every part with the erasures of the licencer. Besides my friend aspires to an academic chair. Patience; some day Timotheus will return from his exile, and his harp, enriched with new strings, will obtain an amnesty.

We complain in France, and truly, of the obstacles which the censorship imposes on the dramatic art, and of the still more serious obstacles by which the jesuits are endeavouring to arrest the progress of civilization and enlightenment. The Presbyterian clergy of Scotland has always similarly endeavoured to subject the conscience to its intolerance. The history of the Scotch theatre might be adduced as an example of this intolerance.

The present house only dates from 1768. Up to that time the children of Thespis found a difficulty in evading the decrees of the synods and the general assembly in tennis courts, barns &c., when, in 1735, an individual poet, Allan Ramsay, caused a theatre to be built at his own expence; but at the end of two years a proclamation of the magistrates, at the instance of the clergy, declared

that theatrical performances were an illegal recreation, and thereupon the ministers instituted a process against the servants of Satan, as they called those who assume at London the title of servants of the king. Such is the power of opinion that by degrees a new theatre was opened notwithstanding the law, and in 1756, (unexampled scandal!) a clergyman, Mr. Home, dared to cause his *Douglas* to be performed. The thunders of excommunication rolled over the head of the author, his friends, and the partizans of the pomps of the devil. Douglas was received with that enthusiasm of opposition which hails Tartuffe amongst us when some president or minister does not wish it to be played. In short, at the present day, many a presbyterian minister allows himself to enter a theatre under pretext of meeting there with lessons in the art of declaiming for the benefit of his sermons. To make amends, the influence of the sceptic Hume is effaced among the laity, and never were the churches so crowded as now, while thirty or forty years ago it was unfashionable to attend the service. It will be seen by and bye whether we are to attribute this religious revolution to the single eloquence of Messrs. Alinson and Chalmers. These instances of mutual compromise are very remarkable.

Politics have sometimes found a voice in the Edinburgh theatre. During the queen's trial allusions were eagerly seized, and even songs

on the subject were called for; in the same manner in 1715 the Jacobites demanded that the orchestra should play them the air of

"May the king enjoy his ain again."

In the great rebellion of 1745, Jacobite songs had a momentary fashion; but in 1749, after the pacification of the Highlands, when the whigs intended to insult the vanquished by calling for the tune of "Culloden" on the anniversary of that fatal battle, the Stuartites found themselves in the majority, and caused the roofs of the theatre to echo with

"Ye are welcome Charlie Stuart."

One of those riots ensued, in which oranges and other such local weapons composed the ammunition of the battle. At present, the approaching visit of George the Fourth procures for us, *God save the King, Rule Britannia, &c.* Poor Scotland forgets herself and her antient ballads; and it is much if a strathspey or a reel revives for a few moments her old opinions.

One of the most singular episodes in the dramatic history of Edinburgh, is the dispute which Garrick's farce of "*High Life Below Stairs*" occasioned there. Footmen are dedicated to ridicule in this farce. They went in a body to the theatre and disturbed the representation to such a degree that their masters were obliged to drive them from the house.

* * * * *

P. S. Since writing this letter, a circumstance has occurred, which may cause us to exclaim

Ou la vertu vas-elle se nicher.

The celebrated Kean has had a very animated explanation with justice on the score of an alderman's wife; and he has been hooted, hissed and repulsed at London. That is to say, the alderman has friends in London who recruit their ranks with moralists in order to disturb the triumphs of Kean under the plea of violated morals: such is the law of retaliation. But the Edinburgh manager, having latterly announced that Kean was engaged for twenty nights, the audience aped those of London. The most curious feature of the affair was a gentleman addressing the house from his place in the two-shilling gallery, in order to threaten the manager with discontinuing to bring his family to the play should he persist in allowing so libertine an actor as Kean to appear on the stage.

Tant de fiel entre-t-il dans l'ame des devots.

LETTER LXXXIV.

TO M. THE COMTE D'HAUTERIVE.

Can the climate of Edinburgh be disparaged? A slight rain scarcely refreshes the atmosphere

when the sun, drying the pavements and the paths in the environs of the town, invites us to picturesque walks. The sky of wintry clouds and frost, wherein the melancholy divinities of Ossian reigned, is doubtless there; but it is also the same climate wherein a few fine days, like those which we enjoy, inspired Buchanan with his ode to the month of May, Ramsay with his pastorals, in which he has so charmingly depicted the locality of each scene like a smiling landscape, and Burns with some of his songs, the poetry of which would be worthy of the shepherds of Sicily or the valleys of Arcadia. This morning I left the philosopher sleeping tranquilly, and in order to prepare myself for breakfasting with Sir Walter Scott, I directed my steps towards the castle of Craig Millar, situated on an eminence at three miles distance from Edinburgh. This fine relic of warlike architecture, which dates from the fifteenth century, is, as it were, protected by several groupes of old trees. The happy combination of its decayed walls with their verdure has supplied the materials of a charming landscape painting to the Turner of Edinburgh, the Rev. J. Thomson.

But I occupied myself less with an examination of this dungeon keep flanked with turrets, with its battlemented walls, and the armorial devices which adorn them, than with the queen who once resided in a fortress now become the domain of a family of robins. Craig Millar has preserved the traces of that poetical Mary Stuart, who in her multiplied Scotch portraits, appeared, with her misfortunes

and her errors, beautiful and affecting as a Madonna of Guido. In 1566 the walls of Craig Millar were the confidants of the perfidious suggestions of Mary's counsellors. It was here that the death of Darnley was plotted, the final consequence of which was the ruin of the queen herself. The neighbouring village, doubtless, furnished a residence for a part of the court; and it has retained the name of Little France.

Notwithstanding the charms of a morning, beautiful as a spring day-break in Provence, notwithstanding the charms of the spot where I was, I could not forget the breakfast which awaited me in Castle-street. The remembrance of Mary Stuart had not power to banish the recollection of the novelist who has depicted her so interestingly in the *Abbot*. At half past nine, I was already in Sir Walter Scott's study.

Sir W. Scott.—"I am delighted that you have not forgot your promise; Lady Scott will be much pleased to see you, and you will dine with one of our first poets, Mr. Crabbe."

"I have perused his verses with real pleasure. He is a poet of common life, but still a poet. You have called him the English Juvenal. It is interesting to meet with him at the house of the poet of chivalry."

Sir W. Scott.—"He is a great poet, and an excellent man; a good and amiable landlord. Do you begin to be somewhat familiar with our town?"

"It surprises me more and more every day; every step produces a theatrical *hit*. You have

yourself selected a house in one of the most picturesque sites; for 'your own romantic town' may be divided into sites as well as quarters."

Sir W. S.—"Like most others, I have abandoned the old town. The most ancient house of the new town is not more than fifty years old; every thing has changed its aspect in this country since 1745. We are now gathering the fruits of the abolition of hereditary jurisdictions, and especially of the extinction of domestic factions. The existing generation is the only one which has not been a witness to some political re-action. Our fathers witnessed the events of 1745; our grandfathers those of 1689 and 1713, and the preceding generation the great rebellion; a generation still farther back would bring us to those epochs of disorder when the sword so seldom reposed in the scabbard."

"Each family now occupies an entire house after the English fashion; families are subdividing themselves more than they used. May not that circumstance have an effect on Scotch sociality, immemorially eulogized as so different from that isolation in which each family in London appears to detach itself from the rest?"

Sir W. S.—"Civilization augments proportionately; the various ranks combine more; the desire of congregating becomes stronger; and never were the assemblies of Edinburgh so brilliant as now. We have, however, some eulogizers of past times, who regret the period when the families of Edinburgh, proud as well as poor, could get a

party together without much expence. All the visits were then paid in sedan chairs; invitations to dinner were unfrequent except on extraordinary occasions; the evening was generally passed modestly round the tea table. But now there is a continual rivalry of luxury and elegance on every side. As much respect is paid to wealth in the fashionable assemblies as to rank and talent; formerly in the inferior classes, neighbours being more dependant on each other, more readily assumed a habit of good intelligence, and a conciliatory interchange of politeness."

"Much is said about your winter routs. Is there the same mob at your doors and in your drawing-rooms as at the routs of London?"

Sir W. Scott—"Nearly so. Upon that point lamentations over the old state of society may be just. After an unluxurious dinner, but during which the bottles of claret and port circulated freely every body went in half an hour to rejoin the ladies, instead of as now, exhausting their patience. After tea all was ready for dancing: the carpet was soon taken up; the piano was orchestra sufficient; there was less ceremony but more gaiety in these impromptu amusements. Now-a-days you receive an invitation a month before hand. There is a grand dinner, but great reserve; the drawing-room is well lighted but crowded, and no place for dancing. No more agreeable conversation at the fire-side; accordingly, every body makes his escape as quickly as possible and goes about till three o'clock in the morning to elbow his

friends or get elbowed in eight or ten drawing-rooms magnificently lighted up."

A portion of this conversation was continued in the breakfast parlour, whither Sir W. Scott invited me to proceed with him at the end of a quarter of an hour's tête-a-tête. We found there Lady Scott and her youngest daughter. I was presented to them. Lady Scott has agreeable features and a prepossessing smile. Miss Scott is a well educated young lady, who is endowed with every requisite to please, and especially, great simplicity of manner; her eldest sister married Mr. Lockhart, a barrister, critic, and author of considerable talent, who possesses a peculiar talent for satire united to much imagination. Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart entered the room after breakfast; Mrs. Lockhart is distinguished by all the attractions of a pretty woman; she is a musician, and sings Scotch airs with great feeling.

Sir W. Scott went out for a moment; Mr. Crabbe was not yet up. Lady Scott addressed several questions to me; in my reply I naturally led the conversation to some compliments on her husband. She appeared fully alive to the value of the good name he has acquired, and was much flattered by what I told her of the enthusiasm with which his works were received in France.

She asked me if I knew Mr. Crabbe; I quoted his principal works, at which Lady Scott appeared rather surprised. "Mr. Crabbe," she said, "imagines his name to be scarcely known in France; he will be much pleased to meet with

a Frenchman who has read his compositions. What is your opinion of Mr. Crabbe?"

"If I were to depict his portrait from his works, I should paint him as a little sour old man, with an air of suffering, moroseness, and derision; but on whom I should also confer, (difficult combination) a degree of susceptibility in the countenance."

Lady Scott.—"You would then be deceived; he is an agreeable old gentleman, of constant equanimity, and of prepossessing and respectable deportment. He has come expressly to Scotland in order to see Sir W. Scott, to whom he is greatly attached. The last time that Sir Walter went to London they were prevented from meeting. Notwithstanding his age, Mr. Crabbe has now performed the journey. He said that he should not be content to die without seeing the poet of Scotland."

Among the many tributes that Sir W. Scott is in the habit of receiving, this ought to flatter him the most.

Mr. Crabbe now entered. He was, in fact, an unpretending old gentleman, gentle, but rather cold in his deportment, and wearing his years well; for he must be an octogenarian. Some little coquetry might be discovered in his person, so neatly was he dressed. After the customary introduction we all sat down, and I was placed between Miss Scott and Mr. Crabbe.

The breakfast was abundant. I recollected that Sir W. Scott always describes with a certain degree of complaisance, the repasts of his heroes. Poor Caleb Balderstone, during the epochs of his periodical famines, would have greatly admired

an enormous ham, which predominated over all the other dishes.

Sir W. Scott addressed me: "We are giving you a Scotch breakfast, doctor; you know the proverb; Scotch breakfast, French dinner, English supper."

"Yes," I replied, "the breakfasts of Scotland formerly obtained the eulogium of a pope's legate."

I smiled in pronouncing these words; for two reasons; in the first place, I referred to a quotation of *Waverley;* it was a shaft launched at the author in the presence of the author himself; I subsequently called to mind, that the first translator of *Waverley* had translated *Pope's Legate*, by the words *commentator* on Pope.*

Mr. Crabbe.—"I rather think that Johnson, otherwise very parsimonious of his praise to Scotland, always approved the Scotch breakfasts."

Lady Scott.—"Dr. Johnson did not come to Scotland in a friendly manner. His details were not intended to dissipate the prejudices of his countrymen on the subject of Scotland. He was a morose author."

Sir Walter.—"His prejudices arose from his

* This translator was not M. Defauconpret; a circumstance which I am bound to remark, in order to do justice to the author of "London in 1819," whose translations are doubtless made with rapidity; but whom it would be unfair to confound with those of some scholars, who, while repeating that they are mediocres, avail themselves of his name to pass off their blunders to his account; it was not he, for example, who finding in Kenilworth the words "Winter's Tale," the name of one of Shakspeare's plays, translated it *Conte de M. Winter*, —*Mr. Winter's Tale!*

disordered habit of body. Johnson must have had good qualities, for, notwithstanding his rudeness, he had many friends."

LADY SCOTT.—"He was a very overweening person."

SIR W. SCOTT.—"His great superiority in literature had given him despotic habits; he believed himself to be above the ordinary rules of society. He was very impatient of contradiction. His *Journey to the Hebrides* made a stir, as all his works did. Whatever may have been his prejudices against Scotland, we must confess that many of his reproaches have not been lost upon us: and more than one change effected since, demonstrate that they were almost always well founded. The Scotch are much displeased with Johnson, for having shewn no enthusiasm for the picturesque localities of their country; but that was the fault of his physical organization; he had no eye for the natural beauties of a country; nothing seemed good to him out of London; he was in dread of solitude. The Scotch pretend that he was ungrateful for their hospitality; but that is a debt which ought not to oblige a literary traveller to write nothing but panegyrics. Johnson, moreover, did repay it, by always receiving with friendship and kindness, such of his Scotch hosts as were brought by any business to London."*

* In a short notice on Johnson which has since appeared, Sir W. Scott expresses himself nearly in the same terms, on the subject of the *Journey to the Hebrides*. I perceive with pleasure, from that circumstance, that my memory has not been unfaithful to me.

Here I forget what incident occurred to divert my attention from what Sir Walter added. I believe it was Miss Scott who spoke to me; and being obliged to hear and reply to her, I lost the thread of an anecdote which the author of *Ivanhoe* very gracefully related. I only caught the particular, that Robin Hood, (the Locksley of Ivanhoe) performed in it the chief character. It was, I believe, an old woman who refused to open her doors to him, and a dialogue ensued between them, which Sir W. Scott repeated with appropriate changes of intonation. At length, one of the two interlocutors obtained what they wanted, by a lucky expression or some original sally. In transcribing this page of my notes, darkened as it is with fragments of unconnected phrases, I again experience a fit of impatience, which I had some difficulty to restrain while I listened to the poet's daughter. She will excuse me for frankly confessing it. Fortunately, I lost nothing of the continuation of the dialogue.

Lady Scott.—"The hazarded judgments of a traveller, may mislead public opinion for a long time; the thing once written, is an authority, till some other writer arises to refute the preceding; but sometimes a quarter of a century may pass between one book and the other."

Mr. Crabbe.—"Travellers and their narratives, now-a-days, succeed each other very rapidly; the French themselves become travellers. (Then addressing himself to me:) What reputation does M. Simon's Journal bear in France?"

"It is considered rich in facts, rich in bon mots,

as well as in tart sarcasms, levelled against France on the subject of England. It is sometimes felt that the author might have been a more patriotic Frenchman; but he is always a man of wit."

LADY SCOTT.—"You have just now named Mr. Charles Nodier as your friend."

"I pique myself on being allowed to call him so."

SIR W. SCOTT.—"Pray thank him for all the kind things he says about me in his *Promenade de Dieppe*."

LADY SCOTT.—"He has said that his journey was abortive, because he had not seen Sir Walter."

"I have heard him warmly express the same regret."

LADY SCOTT.—"I rather fear that M. Nodier must have travelled a little too rapidly."

"Not finding Sir W. Scott at Edinburgh, he lost no time in seeing the places which Sir Walter has described."

SIR WALTER.—"And M. Nodier has depicted them himself like a poet."

"He had the scenes themselves and your poems to inspire him. His descriptions must have given satisfaction in Scotland."

LADY SCOTT.—"But M. Nodier has also some little scandal to reproach himself with."

"It does not occur to my recollection."

LADY SCOTT.—"For a Frenchman, your friend has not been very gallant towards the Scotch ladies."

"If that be the case, I am sure he will be sin-

cerely afflicted, for he admires the ladies of all countries, and more especially those of Scotland."

Lady Scott.—"But where did he see the Scotch ladies go barefooted?"

Mr. Crabbe.—"Has he really said so?"

"I expressed the same doubt by the same question."

Lady Scott.—"Oh! yes! in his letter about Glasgow.* The Parisian ladies must have finely

* Beneath is the passage; for my friend must not be judged without the heads of Lady Scott's indictment being stated.

"—Les femmes du peuple, presque toutes les femmes de la classe intermédiaire et un *assez grand nombre* des femmes de la classe élevée marchent à pieds nus; quelques unes ont adopté les souliers seulement. Les dames à la mode, qui ont emprunté les vêtemens des Parisiennes, ont aussi emprunté leur chaussure, ou plutôt la nôtre; car elles sont chaussées en hommes; mais cette partie de leur accoutrement est celle qui les incommode le plus, et dont elles se défont le plus volontiers quand elles sont libres. A peine une brillante Ecossaise a épuisé l'admiration des fashionables de Glascow, elle cherche la solitude; et la première pensée qui l'occupe dans un sentier écarté, dans un jardin solitaire, dans l'ombre mystérieuse de son appartement, ce n'est pas comme chez nous le souvenir du dernier homme qui l'a regardée en soupirant, ou de la dernière femme qui a éclipsé sa toilette, c'est l'impatient besoin d'ôter ses souliers et ses bas, et de courir pieds nus sur ses tapis, sur la pelouse de ses pièces de verdure, ou sur le sable roulant des chemins. L'aspect de ces pieds nus n'a presque jamais rien de repoussant, même dans le peuple. Jamais rien de pénible pour la sensibilité quand on les voit se déployer sur les dalles polies des larges trottoirs de Glascow. Les pieds chaussés ont beaucoup plus de désavantage. La forme plate et amples des souliers à boucles ou à cordons qui les enveloppent ne dissimule pas du tout leur grosseur, qui est très conforme sans doute aux proportions naturelles, surtout chez un peuple où rien n'a gêné, pendant une longue suite de siècles, la liberté des développemens, mais qui est choquante pour nos yeux accoutumés à l'exiguité forcée du pied des Françaises, qui sont, sous ce rapport, une espèce d'intermédiaire entre les Ecossaises et les Chinoises. Le pied des montagnards, destiné à s'appuyer sur des espaces étroits, glissans, escarpés, devait être nécessairement large et fort. Les pieds dont la petitesse est hors de toute

laughed at the expence of the wild Caledonian beauties. The perfidy of the thing consists in having feigned to find fault with the little feet of the French ladies. Did M. Nodier, or his fellow companions, really see Scotch ladies run about with naked feet? Does the observation come from M. Nodier himself, or while he was admiring the mountains, were his friends collecting for him romances about the towns?"

"Of his companions, I only know one intimately; Mr. Taylor, our common friend, an artist and man of talent, whose gallantry I cannot call in question."

Lady Scott.—"Those who see the Scotch ladies running about with naked feet, must renounce the title of gallantry. We are no longer savages. That was a scandalous attack of M. Nodier."

I was a little embarrassed in pleading the cause of my poor friend, when thus accused by a lady, who, whether in joke or earnest, had the appearance of being vexed. Sir Walter put an end to this little scene, by a charming trait. Feigning to be still more vexed than Lady Scott, and taking up the conversation, "Yes, yes," he added in French, "it was scandalous; and you must tell M. Nodier for us, that if ever he comes to Scotland

proportion sonte une beauté de boudoir, dont l'avantage ne peut être apprécié que des personnes condamnées à ne voir la terre que par la fenêtre, et à ne la parcourir qu'en carrosse."

I am bound further to add, that C. Nodier is not the only traveller who has made this observation. As for myself, I have seen no Scotch lady above the class of *Grisettes* going bare-footed, but I have seen few *bien chaussées*.

again, our ladies will reserve the punishment of the *savate* for him."*

Lady Scott laughed as heartily as Mr. Crabbe and myself at this *bon mot*, pronounced with a tolerably pure accent, but more than all with that smile replete with archness, which confers so much grace on the head of the poet of modern Scotland.

I forget by what transition it was, that the conversation turned on the subject of Voltaire; I believe, however, it was in consequence of a question which I put to Sir W. Scott, about a fine portrait of Charles XII. which adorns the breakfast parlour. Mr. Crabbe spoke with moderation of the influence exercised by Voltaire over the public mind of France; and asked me whether religion had not lost much of its lustre and influence since 1789.

* * * * *

Mr. Crabbe also spoke favourably of the character of the catholic priests, and the politics of France engaged us for a few moments.

Sir W. Scott.—"French morals are the most powerful auxiliaries of the monarchy in France; besides, you have princes educated in the school of misfortune."

Mr. Crabbe.—"And whose exile must have familiarized them with constitutional ideas."

"This double lesson could not escape being profitable to them. Your Stuarts did not know

* The conversation was in English; the above phrase would prove, if need were, that Sir W. Scott sufficiently understands French.

how to prolong the period of their restoration, because they had passed the time of their exile at the court or in the kingdom of our Louis XIV., a great king, but a great despot."

Sir. W. Scott.—"We have had at Edinburgh, His Royal Highness the Count D'Artois, and the princes his sons; they resided in Holyrood House, which from 1745 to 1793 had been uninhabited."

I repeated the two verses of *Marmion* which refer to this circumstance:

"With wonder, grief and awe,
Great Bourbon's relics sad she saw."

Sir. W. Scott.—"One cannot, in fact, avoid contemplating, with sorrow and respect, the noble vestiges of a royal family; those princes became the residents of a palace, where princes had formerly reigned, with whose misfortunes their misfortunes had so many analogies.* The imprint of ineffaceable blood† is one of the traces which Queen Mary left there of her residence. The edifice had been partly defaced by the republican soldiers of Cromwell. James II. had resided there when he was only Duke of York, and in 1745, the Pre-

* A painting which represents the family of Charles I., after his execution, was the first object which the brother of Lewis XVI. perceived on awaking from sleep, after his arrival.

† The spot where Rizzio received his mortal wound is recognized still by a deep stain of blood. I know not whether the emotion be peculiar to myself, says C. Nodier, on the subject of this ineffaceable stain, but I have never seen any thing like this theatre of one of the most sanguinary tragedies in modern history, with all its decorations, even to the blood which still remains ineffaceable, like that of Duncan on the fingers of Lady Macbeth.

tender, Charles Edward, had held there his transitory court."

"From what period does the destruction of the abbey date?"

Sir W. Scott.—"The reformation left it almost untouched, if not respected; it was the obstinate bigotry of the Duke of York which was fatal to it. During his vice-royalty, he had ingratiated by his ceremonious attention, himself with the haughty aristocracy of Scotland, who certainly proved their fidelity to him at a later moment; but when he ascended the throne, he alienated the people against himself and the abbey, by causing mass to be performed there, and by establishing in the palace a printing office and a catholic school. When the great crisis of 1688 approached, the cries of "down with popery and the popish king" were heard round the abbey, and the priest of the chapel was insulted. The government caused a man to be executed for seditious discourse, and the guards fired upon the mob, in order to disperse it. On the 10th of December, 1688, the insurrection exhibited a more formidable aspect. Several whig gentlemen took part in the tumult; the soldiers did not resist long; the populace made themselves masters of the castle, and, in their blind fury, devastated the chapel, insulting at the same time, in their tombs, the ashes of kings for ages buried there."*

* I have been able to rectify this passage, in comparing it with what Sir W. Scott has since published on Holyrood Abbey, in the *Provincial Antiquities*.

"Is not Holyrood Abbey the most elegant Gothic ruin of Scotland?"

Sir W. Scott.—"It is only a chapel, and, besides, we have that of Roslyn, which is in better preservation. The magistrates of Edinburgh covered Holyrood Abbey with a new roof, which was found too heavy for the old walls, of six centuries, standing. The roof gave way, and completed the ruin of the abbey as it now stands. The great window, the elegance of which produces the finest effect, has been tolerably well repaired. It is to be hoped that something more will be done for this noble ruin."

"Is not your chateau situated near another famous ruin?"*

Sir W. Scott.—"Melrose Abbey, the finest Gothic ruin in Scotland."

"I must see it 'by pale moonlight.' I referred to the commencement of a song in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*"

Sir W. Scott.—"It is admirable by day as well as night."

Lady Scott.—"I hope you will not depart without seeing Melrose, and consequently Abbotsford. We shall go there after the King's visit;

* In his notice on Holyrood House, Sir W. Scott adds, (what he did not observe on the day in question,) that at one time, it was the custom to shew strangers what remained of the bones of several persons of eminence, interred in the Abbey, such as the femora of Henry Darnley, which demonstrated his gigantic height, the skull of Queen Margaret, and a kind of mummy, which is affirmed to be an old Countess of Roxburgh.

but if you cannot wait till then, you may go in Sir Walter's name; and the housekeeper will shew you every thing with pleasure."

"I shall be happy to avail myself of your politeness; for I should not be satisfied with quitting Scotland without having seen Melrose and Abbotsford."

Lady Scott.—"You will do well also not to omit Dryburgh Abbey."

I postpone the rest of this conversation till another day. I have suppressed, as you may conceive, many common places, the writing of which would make them appear more insignificant still; but the little nothings of the conversation acquired a real charm from the lips of Sir W. Scott; a more agreeable relater of an anecdote, and a more polite host, could not be met with. Sir Walter combines in the highest degree, the inspirations of a man of genius, and the not less rare gifts of the man of the world.

P. S. The work of C. Nodier has been translated by Mr. Clifford, with an elegant fidelity. *Blackwood's Magazine*, in noticing it, expresses its astonishment that a Frenchman has been enabled to describe Scotland like a great poet. It is true, that Mr. Blackwood asked me yesterday, if my friend Charles Nodier was not a *petit maitre*, and the author of the article in *Blackwood's Magazine* depicts him, in fact, as a Parisian *petit maitre*. I am no longer surprised at his astonishment. On my return to France, I find a new *Voyage en Ecosse*, by a young man who permits himself to treat C.

Nodier rather cavalierly. This he is at liberty to do. M. Nodier will not deign to be troubled at it. But it is not M. Nodier who translates "plumb pudding" by *pouding de plomb;* "Jolly wine" by *joli* (pretty) *vin,* not to mention the levity with which the author judges of the whole English stage, from a pretty melo-drama acted at a summer theatre.

LETTER LXXXV.

TO M. BILLING.

NOTHING can be more smiling and variegated than the course of the two little rivers, which under the name of the Esk of the south and the Esk of the north, unite and terminate in the Forth, at Musselburgh. You sometimes traverse sterile plains, searching in vain for some interesting locality, when suddenly a gentle murmur reveals the vicinity of one of those twin rivulets of Mid Lothian. If you follow its windings, it will sometimes lead you across rocks, which the water, becoming more rapid, overleaps in a cascade, or along the skirts of a copse, the shade of which will for a while arrest your steps. The two rivulets unite at the park of Dalkeith, a charming residence of the

Buccleugh family, where I stopped an hour in proceeding to Melrose. The existing chateau was built on the site of that which was formerly the property of the Douglases. Under the minority of James VI., the regent Morton frequently sojourned there: Dalkeith was then called the *Lion's Cave.* This domain was acquired by the Buccleugh family at the end of the 17th century."

The farther one proceeds from the charming scenery of Dalkeith, the more the country one traverses, as far as Borthwick, changes its aspect. It consists of a succession of eminences, vallies and little plains, alternately barren and cultivated. The approaches to Borthwick prepare us for a more picturesque, and at the same time a more graceful prospect. It is a valley, which a rivulet named Gore waters and fertilizes. A thick growth of heath borders its course, and some old trees, old as the dungeon keep, have remained faithful to its decay.

Borthwick castle is one of the most curious models of the feudal architecture of Scotland. The Baron, who founded it, by an express permission, recorded in a charter of James I. (1430,) took care, as Sir W. Scott informs us, to build it on the farthest limits of his domain, according to the usage of the barons of his time, in order to be enabled to invade with more facility the neighbouring demesnes. The Lords of Borthwick often figure in the annals of Scotland; but I shall limit myself to the relation of one anecdote of this house, which I select, because it has probably sup-

plied the author of the *Abbot* with one of the most curious scenes of that novel.

Towards the middle of the 16th century, the Lord of Borthwick had been visited by the excommunication of the prelate of St. Andrew's. William Langlands, the *Bacularius* of the Archbishop, carried the letters of excommunication to the curate of Borthwick, requiring him to publish them in his sermons. Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the chateau employed themselves in acting the singular farce of the election of a masquerade prelate, who under the designation of the Abbot of Foolery, exercised all the ecclesiastical powers in order to turn them into derision. The successful candidate repaired in grand procession to the church, proclaimed therein his sovereign authority, without any respect for the mission of the *Bacularius*, caused him to be hurried to the mill dam, and compelled him to jump into the water. Not content with this partial immersion, he gave orders to his people to duck poor Mr. Langlands; then carrying him back to the church, he tore up the letters of the prelate, and caused them to be infused in some wine, which the *Bacularius* was compelled to swallow. The recollection of this scene of ecclesiastical *Saturnalia*, naturally recalls the affair of which the respectable prior of Melrose suffers the mortification, in the time of the Barons of Avenel. At twelve or fifteen miles from Kennaquhair, the *Monastery* and the *Abbot* are no longer fabulous narratives.

Mary Stuart resided some time at Borthwick,

with Bothwell. She there listened to the seductions of love, and considered herself happy, at all events tranquil, when the novelty of an insurrection occurred to interrupt one of her *fêtes*, and she was obliged to escape in the disguise of a page. The Lords of Borthwick were constantly attached to the fortune of the Stuarts; Cromwell entered the castle in the character of a master; but it was by means of the breach which his cannon had effected in the old rampart.

Beneath the shadow, it may be said, of Borthwick's keep, was a fortified tower, which formerly served as a place of refuge to one of the ancestors of Sir W. Scott. This tower, situated at a little distance from Borthwick, in a ravine, was called the retreat or cavern of Scott of Harden. This Scott was a determined freebooter, whom Sir Walter has introduced in his *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

"An aged knight to danger steeled,
With many a moss-trooper came on;
And azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
High over Borthwick's mountain-flood,
His wood-embosomed mansion stood;
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plundered England low;
His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms,
In youth, might tame his rage for arms;

And still, in age, he spurned at rest,
And still his brows the helmet pressed,
Albeit the blanched locks below
Where white as Dinlay's spotless snow:
Five stately warriors drew the sword
Before their father's band;
A braver knight than Harden's lord
Ne'er belted on a brand."*

Scott of Harden married Mary Scott, daughter of Phillip Scott, of Dryhope, and celebrated in border song, under the name of the Flower of Yarrow. Sir Walter Scott descends from one of their five sons. There is extant, a curious charter, which demonstrates the suspicion which the Baron of Harden awakened in the minds of his best friends. In his marriage contract, his father-in-law agreed to board him and lodge him during a year and a day; but five barons agreed to force the son-in-law to depart, if he took it in his head to remain after that time. A public notary signed the deed in the name of all the parties, none of them being able to read or write. Now-a-days, thanks to the parochial schools, there is scarcely a Scotch peasant, who cannot, like Burns, send a love letter to his mistress.

The horn of the formidable Baron of Harden is yet in the possession of one of his descendants,

* I cite the passage, in order to have occasion to make the arms of Sir W. Scott known. The *bandlet* of Murdieston was added to them after the acquisition of the demesne of that name. They are supported by a dog, with the device, *Watch Veel*, and surmounted by the exergue, *Reparabit sua cornua Phœbe;* as if to say to the moss troopers: To horse; it will be full moon when you arrive on the estates you are going to plunder.

Mr. Scott of Harden. When provisions were on the point of failing, his wife, the Flower of Yarrow, served up as the last dish on the supper table, a pair of spurs. The moss troopers did not require any explanation of this riddle; the horn sounded; the horses were bridled and saddled; and the troop taking the field, proceeded on an expedition to England, or to the domains of some enemy who had supplied them with a plea of retaliation. On his return from one of these excursions, Scott of Harden introduced to his wife an orphan, whom she brought up and became attached to. This young captive grew up in the midst of tales of war, without contracting a partiality for its cruel pleasures. Nature and misfortune had conspired to make him a poet; he sung the exploits of the marauders; but only for the sake of introducing in his songs such subjects as he preferred; the description of the mountain and valley where he loved to indulge in reverie, the games of the shepherds, their amours, &c. &c. Tradition has preserved the pastoral ballads of this poet, but his name and birth have remained unknown. He has supplied an episode replete with elegance, to Dr. Leyden, a friend of Sir W. Scott, in his poem entitled *Scenes of Infancy*. The *Lay of the Last Minstrel* is, as may be seen, a faithful picture of feudal manners of Scotland.

From Borthwick, the road winds between more nearly approximating hills, as far as Galashiels, a little village where there is a manufactory of common cloth, which formerly cost no more than

2*s.* 6*d.* per yard, but having been improved, now costs three times that sum.

This village derives its name from the rivulet of Gala, famous in the Scotch songs, and which augments the still more famous waters of the Tweed. We now begin to recognize the places so admirably described in the *Monastery*; the hills delineate their outlines in graceful contours on the horizon; the colours of the heath which covers their eminences, contrast with that of the knots of oak, birch, and willow, &c. at their base, and with the still more vivid verdure of the vallies. In the general aspect of the landscape there is nothing sublime; it will not bear comparison with the highlands of the north; here all is calm and pastoral. Nothing can be more enchanting than the banks of the Tweed. I followed its course on foot, till I recognized the white turrets of Abbotsford castle, situated on the opposite bank, and deriving its name from its situation. This chateau strikes the imagination in the first instance by its eccentric construction, the irregularity of which renders it difficult to describe. It consists of a principal tower, which commands others of a minor elevation. It is a mixture of the architecture of old fortresses with that of the gothic abbey; the casements of unequal form are distributed at greater or smaller distances from one another, on the *façade* and the sides. In the intervals which separate them, niches appear to have been designed for the statues of saints, and one is still occu-

pied by a holy Virgin. Coats of arms also adorn the entablature here and there. Nor is the roof less curious in the singularity of the antique chimnies, battlements and turrets which surmount it. The edifice is not completely finished; and the work-people are still employed there. I was tempted to risk crossing the ford of the Tweed, the mirror of which reflects this fantastic manor and the wood of young larch planted by Sir Walter Scott himself on its banks; but I reflected with a smile on the misadventure of the father Sacristan;* and although I was under no alarm of being played the same trick by some malicious fairy, I sought a surer passage a little lower down over a bridge; it was not that, the keeper of which was so deaf to the entreaties of the unfortunate monk. I also vainly looked for the mill of Mysie; but luckily the striking ruins of Melrose Abbey still attest the magnificence of the great monastery of Kennaquhair. I bent my way to the village of Melrose, in order to rest there awhile before I returned to visit Abbotsford. I hired a bed for the night, and ordered supper. Although my philosopher did not accompany me in this excursion, I shall not be inclined to lose sight of the realities of ordinary life for romantic reminiscences; neither for the rural charms of Teviotdale, nor for the ruins of its abbeys and its chateaux.

* *Monastery*, vol. 1, chap. 5.

LETTER LXXXVI.

TO M. VICTOR HUGO.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when I departed from the George at Melrose, in order to proceed to Abbotsford. The horizon had been clear since morning, and the air as mild as the month of May in France, although illuminated by an August sun. About middle day a light breeze arose at intervals, pursuing a few transparent clouds across the azure of the sky. The elegantly abrupt mountains of Roxburghshire were gilded with a vivid light from their extreme summit to their base: anon, broad shadows rapidly descended their sides and appeared to lose themselves in the waves of the Tweed. These fluctuating colours of the landscape added to the charm of its variety. In other respects the plains were calm and silent. I saw no rural labours going on; the river ran peaceably and secludedly along; and its murmur did not reach even the path I followed on its right bank.

At the end of half an hour's walking through a scene, the solitude of which constantly augmented its smiling characteristics, I found myself at the limits of the domain of Sir Walter Scott, or at least of the ring fence which surrounds his

country villa. Here there was more life and motion; the noise of the work-people, or the sound of the song which cheered their labours, were heard; anon the neighing of a steed wandering freely through his pasture; or the voice of a herdsman calling his cows, one of which had ventured into the Tweed, and suffered herself to be carried too far by the current. All these details, which usually escape notice, made me attentive and curious. At length, in clearing the gate, I roused the barking of several dogs, which ran to meet me,—a female hound, among the rest, of a beautiful shape, called, I believe, Maida,* and the favourite of her master, to whom his dogs are as dear as those which play so fine a part in *Guy Mannering* were to Dandie Dinmont, or the faithful Luffra† to Douglas. Fortunately their barking salutations were not of a hostile character, and they apprized Mrs. ——,‡ the housekeeper, of my arrival, who tranquillized them by her presence. Having used Sir Walter Scott's name, and said I came by his permission, I was admitted without difficulty to see the whole of the chateau, the interior arrangement of which, and the furniture, I shall describe as briefly as possible. Let me not forget to notice, in the first instance, a little parterre with a basin in the middle of it, which fronts

* Poor Maida is since dead, and her effigy in stone adorns the principal entrance gate of Abbotsford, with a Latin epitaph.

† *Lady of the Lake.*

‡ My memory has suffered her name to escape.

the gate, and which is seen under the window of the green-house. This basin is adorned with eccentric figures carved in stone, which are really fantastic caprices, and reminded me of the grotesque images of the *pantagruelines*. Figures not less eccentric, but all modelled after those of the *bas reliefs*, the pedestals, the cornices, and the entablatures of Melrose, have been introduced into the sculpture of the interior apartments. There are particularly some burlesque caryatides resembling monks, some overwhelmed by the load which they support, and expressing their fatigue by painful grimaces; others playing on a musical instrument, or making some grimace.* The dining-room is large, handsome, and adorned with pictures and engravings, like the adjacent rooms. Among these subjects of art, I observed a magnificent engraving of the celebrated ballad of *Chevy Chase;* Percy and Douglas slain in one day; two illustrious warriors fallen victims of their unreflecting bravery, or rather of the habits of marauding, in which their entire lives were passed. I admired a fine portrait of Fairfax, the republican general; Falstaff, with his fair round belly; a portrait of Dr. Rutherford, the maternal uncle of Sir Walter; Shakspeare, in his hour of jollity, smiling, with a glass in his hand; some landscapes

* It is well known that the monastic architects not unwillingly sacrificed, by these grotesque images, the monks of a rival order to the spirit of ridicule.

of the Flemish school; a fine portrait of the Duke of Monmouth, and especially one of Claverhouse, calm, noble, and worthy of what the author of *Old Mortality* has told us of him. This portrait is so handsome that it may serve to explain the sort of prepossession with which he is introduced by a poet who had him frequently under his eye.

Another portrait on the opposite wall occasioned me a not less animated emotion. It was the head of Mary Stuart, but bleeding and placed in a basin at the moment of its being separated from the trunk. That alluring countenance, which wherever it is met with, inspires a tender melancholy, caused me to shudder for the first time. It is now time to enter the poet's study, or rather his arsenal. It is in fact a little museum of armour. Let us enter with precaution, and promise discretion in this *sanctum sanctorum*, which will not improbably remind us of that of the Laird of Monkbairns.

The light is admitted through gothic panes of glass, painted of various colours. On a large table, placed in the centre of the apartment, were three of those ancient Scotch targets which still compose a part of the armour of the Highlanders. This armour consists, in what concerns its defensive portion, of a long sword, or claymore, hung on the left side; a poignard or dirk, stuck in the girdle to the right, and destined for near combat when two enemies gripe each other so closely that the sword is no longer a serviceable weapon; a musket and a brace of pistols complete the warlike

apparatus. Formerly, the highlanders also carried a kind of short hatchet; and before they possessed muskets, or when they were short of ammunition, they substituted the Lochaber axe, a kind of long pike, terminated by a formidable blade, equally fit for warding or thrusting. All these warlike instruments figure in the cabinet of Sir Walter Scott, as well as a coat of mail, an addition to the Scotch *costume* which the chieftains occasionally adopted. Among the muskets there is one which appertained to Rob Roy Mac Gregor. Old armour, cuirasses, cuises, casques, &c. are arranged in the angles of this armoury, and on first sight seem as if they were the immoveable figures of so many ancient kights, who await there the fiat of the magician in order to restore them to their existence and illustrious name.

I thought I recognized at least one of those cuirasses which Sir Walter Scott has told us he purchased at Waterloo; and those who in France have bitterly criticised *Paul's Letters*, will impute to him the purchase of these trophies at a low price as a crime. I shall not participate in that opinion, even in ceasing to regard Sir Walter Scott in the light of an antiquary; and for this reason; that I would not preclude a French antiquary from the right of furnishing his cabinet with English arms, and thence deriving a gratification to national vanity. The Scotch are pleased with the reminiscences of Waterloo, because they allege that Buonaparte loudly applauded the bravery of the *Scotch Grey Regiment* on that occasion.

A particular relick caused me to carry back my thoughts towards more distant times; it was a seat or elbow chair, made with the wood which remained of the house where

> "William Wallace was put to death by felon hand
> For guarding weel his father land."

So says the inscription.

From the armoury I passed into the library, again crossing the apartments I had already visited. Here, I confess, that had I not feared the imputation of being impertinent, I should have asked the housekeeper's permission to devote a good hour to an inspection of the poet's books, of which, however, the greater part is at Edinburgh. With what avidity should I have opened those which I might have suspected of being most frequently read! How excellently well an hour of solitude would have been employed among those treasures! The shelves of one case were occupied by German and Danish works; those of another by Italian and Spanish books. In the compartments dedicated to French books, I observed a fine collection of our *fabliaux* and chronicles, a Montaigne, *Corneille*, the latter a magnificent edition, &c. I could have wished to have detected Racine; but it was not there, or I knew not where to find it. Among the English books I saw a copy of the *Monastery*, and on a table were many volumes of the novels and tales by the author of *Waverley*. I opened the *Antiquary*, and read a page, for the pleasure of re-perusing it on some future day, while recalling to mind the spot where I perused it.

From the library I proceeded to visit the apartments of the first floor. I remarked there several portraits, one of which represents Mrs. Lockhart and her sister, with Maida near them, and another, the critic Jeffrey, a striking resemblance!

An exterior terrace led me to a square turret, which constitutes part of the chateau, and is distinguished by an old iron door, immoveable, and as it were, incrusted in the wall. I asked the use of it. It is the door of the old prison of Edinburgh called the Tollbooth; the same which was substituted for that which the populace burnt, in order to take their revenge on Porteous; the door, in short, which was closed on Effie Deans. When the Tollbooth was pulled down, this door was presented by the magistrates of Edinburgh to the "Castellan" of Abbotsford. I went out on the roof of the tower, and enjoyed an enchanting prospect. The music of a bagpipe suddenly resounded from the adjacent mountains; and whether the distance modified its shrieking accents, or the poetry of the spot I occupied communicated itself to the instrument, I for the first time in my life discovered a degree of charm in the music. I moreover indulged in the imagination that it might perhaps be the bagpipe of Roderic of Skye, an old musician, who finds, as I have been told, a hospitable and munificient *chief* in the castellan of Abbotsford.

In descending from the tower, I took my leave of the obliging housekeeper, not omitting to make her a little present, which she gratefully received. She left me to lounge by myself in the garden,

and in a little wood planted on the banks of the Tweed, after having pointed out to me an alcove, constructed out of pinewood, and furnished with chairs, benches, and a table of bark. The dogs had by this time made their peace with me, and suffered themselves to be familiarly caressed. I passed a delicious hour under the shade of the shrubbery, and along the banks of the Tweed. At the moment of my departure, with the intention of renewing my visit, I committed a little theft, which I am bound to confess. A last rose of summer still decorated with its blushing corolla the decaying foliage of a rose tree. I gathered it, not without smiling to myself at the association which came to my mind, connecting the palace of Azor with the garden of the Scotch magician. I concealed this trophy of my excursion to Abbotsford between the leaves of a volume which I had in my pocket, and I carried off besides some oak leaves.*

* Our friend C. Nodier has become my accomplice in this rose larceny by gratefully accepting it. The oak leaves I presented to C. Gosselin the bookseller, who is as happy in reading Scott's novels as in selling ten thousand copies of them.

LETTER LXXXVII.

TO M. JULES SALADIN.

If ever I write a romance, I shall certainly confer on my hero some of my peculiar tastes; but I shall take care not to make him one of those imaginary personages who only exist in an element of enthusiasm, and whom the romance writer never introduces but on the stage of an ideal world, through fear of degrading him by connection with the prosaic territory of ordinary life. I will make him occasionally sit down to table and describe, as Sir Walter Scott does not fail to do, the good or bad dinners which may be served up to him. If, for instance, he travels in Scotland, and passes Melrose, I should wish him on returning from Abbotsford Castle, to find ready for him at the inn a rich *hoché-pot*,* an excellent roast fowl, a juicy rump steak, a rich pudding, cream, a gooseberry tart, the whole moistened with ale or beer, which is always exquisite in Scotland, accompanied with a bottle of port, of which, on invitation, his host will seat himself to partake his fair proportion. The landlord should be of a jolly disposition, chatting freely, and forgetting all his national reserve, in order to laugh and even sing,

* Soup consisting of beef, mutton, and other viands, served up with the broth.

if it be only to demonstrate that his wine is really made from the fragrant grape of Portugal. As soon as the bottle is empty, and the history of the neighbourhood told, the landlord should pay his respects to some other traveller, and a lively attentive barmaid, sufficiently well dressed to appear like the landlord's daughter, shall reply to the summons of the bell, clear the table, guarantee that the bed is well made,* smile from the corner of her eye at the incredulity with which this assertion is received, and smile still more engagingly at the compliment which all Scotch damsels will receive in her person, and by degrees become sufficiently familiar to relate the history of her father. My hero should then visit Melrose by "pale moonlight;" return and have an excellent sleep till the next day; make a good breakfast the following morning; and be greatly surprised to find that the charge for this good cheer, good bed, and instructive conversation, is no more than the moderate sum of seven shillings. The best of all is that I can write at the end of the chapter—*fact!*

When visiting the Abbey, I missed the company of Captain Clutterbuck.† In default of his attendance I once thought of resorting to the sexton, when the innkeeper introduced me to a *cicerone*, who supplied the place of both; one Mr. John

* This is the weak side of the inns, not only in Scotland, but throughout Great Britain; but a traveller sleeps well in them when he has employed his day well.

† This is the half-pay officer O——n, of Melrose.—See the introduction to the *Monastery*.

Bower, whose house is adjoining to the Monastery itself. But in the first instance I strayed thither alone, and consigned myself to the indulgence of my own reflections in the cemetery, in the midst of which the august ruins of Melrose arise. These remains are so sublime and beautiful that one is surprised into an admiration of them, fragments as they are, as if they were complete, without reference to the past. Suddenly a solemn voice resounded among them; the voice of the clock, whose silent hands I had not till then perceived. Nothing can be more seriously impressive than this voice of Time, which seems confined to the duty of counting the hours for solitude, and for the defunct whose ashes lie beneath one's steps. The children of the village, however, come and play on the turf of the cemetery of Melrose. There were still some there when I arrived, but they all quickly retired, excepting one, whom I had not at first perceived, at some paces from me, asleep on the fragment of a tomb, and who suddenly rising, ran off in haste, no doubt for fear of being scolded by his mother. Anon, the imagination began to demand an account of Time of all that he had destroyed, and endeavoured to fill up the gap by divining the magnificence of that which exists no longer from that which still remains. The church alone, in its fallen state, covers a space of 258 feet in length, by 137 in width, and embraces in its entire precinct a circumference of 913. The grand turret or belfry may still possibly be about 88 feet in height; but it is

difficult to calculate what was its pristine elevation.

"Destroy the nests," said J. Knox, "and the crows will exist no longer." Every step that a traveller takes in Scotland, he meets with some ruin, which attests the realization of the reformer's admonition; and to whatever faith he may appertain, he is tempted to utter a malediction on the man who preached Vandalism under the abused name of Christ.

The Church of Melrose Abbey was modelled on the plan of a St. John's cross. The mutilated arms of the Scotch kings and abbots may still be discerned on the stones. Eight casements of the nave still exist, laterally adorned with heads of monks and nuns; and surmounted with pinnacles of consummately beautiful sculpture. In a niche is a Virgin, which Sir W. Scott has caused to be copied for his Chateau. The head of the infant Saviour is wanting. According to a tradition, which has been perpetuated in spite of Protestantism, the Calvinist Erostratus who dared to mutilate this sculpture had his arm struck with palsy.* This part of the edifice is curious on account of an eccentric decoration of Gothic sculptures, all of the finest execution. They consist of roses, crowns, lilies, heads of cherubims and syrens, a sow playing on a bagpipe, a fox holding two doves in his mouth, an old monk playing a guitar, while oppressed by the weight of another image which has disappeared; a cripple on the shoulders of a blind

* His name was Thomson.

man; dragon's heads, and I know not what, grotesque or graceful figures, which I can only compare to a mock heroic canto of Ariosto or Pulci. One of these figures on the side of the great casement of the south, represents a man whose head emerges from the midst of a tuft of ivy, and who is exhibited in the act of cutting his throat with a knife. Lower are some musicians; then a monk who applies his hand to his ear in imitation of a speaking trumpet, and another follows, whose eyes are protruding from his head with the effort he makes to rise under a heavy load. All these fanciful caprices of the sculptor, demonstrate a remarkable facility of execution. Every face appears speaking to you. The suicide has a distressed air, which excites sympathy; the monk, whose gesture is that of an attentive listener, really seems in the act of receiving a confession; the musicians execute their airs with expressive gaiety. You feel inclined to assist the poor monks, who appear to tell you that they are overloaded, &c. In short, there is life and motion throughout this gallery of sculptures.

But a part of our admiration must be reserved for the casements, which, notwithstanding their vast proportions, are of rare lightness, richness and elegance. The great casement of the west is thirty-six feet high by sixteen feet wide. Every fragment of the moulding appears to have been elaborated with a delicacy which the lapidary devotes to the cutting of a diamond. Having been stopped by a closed door, while seeking to go

into the cloisters, I recollected Mr. Bower, and proceeded to his residence. He accompanied me into the interior of the Abbey, where I saw with satisfaction that scaffoldings had been recently erected, by order of the Buccleugh family, with a view to the repairing of this imposing edifice.

I am inadequate to describe the spectacle which displays itself to the spectator's astonished eyes, beneath these roofs :

> "The pillared arches were over their head,
> And beneath their feet the bones of the dead."
>
> *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

In consequence of the delicacy of its numerous details, this magnificent fabric might be compared to a basket of flowers artificially arranged. From the capitals of each columnar *faisceau* issue branches, in sheafs and garlands, which form arcades with surprising boldness of design. What elegance, and at the same time, what variety in the sculptures of the flowers on the ceiling !

> "The darkened roof rose high aloof."
>
> *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

Along the walls of the nave are chapels, which still supply places of sepulture for the Pringles, the Kerrs, the Scotts, and other families descended from the Border Chiefs. Besides the marble slabs which indicate their family vaults by their epitaphs, other monumental stones preserve the names of some monks, who little thought that their ashes would one day be mingled with the ashes of heretics. It is moreover surmised, that

one of those chapels contain the mortal remains of Alexander the Second King of Scotland, and Mr. Bower pointed out to me a still more illustrious monument, that of the magician Michael Scott. His head is sculptured on a tablet of marble let into the wall; and thanks to my host's good wine, I felt myself capable of maintaining a fair front, if the magician himself had appeared to us as he did to William of Deloraine. It may be readily believed that Michael was a worthy and honourable sorcerer, since he deserved being buried in the same Abbey where reposed so many holy abbots, whose every miracle was a blessing to the country. Such was the monk Waldeve, who during a famine multiplied the corn in the granaries of Melrose to such a degree, as to supply 40,000 poor people during three months. John Knox would probably have succeeded in convicting Waldeve of pious fraud; but if the monks had never committed others, John Knox would probaby have never raised his voice against them. Melrose Abbey, also boasted formerly of possessing the heart of Robert Bruce.

The cloister of the Abbey is worthy of the rest of the edifice. The sculpture which adorns it, in perfect preservation, represents flowers of all kinds in *bas relief*,

> "Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
> Glistened with the dew of night;
> Nor herb, nor floweret, glistened there,
> But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair."
>
> *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

The poet is alone requisite to describe these characteristics. In order to depict what he depicts, prose is compelled to translate his poetry.

Before I quitted the Abbey I had an opportunity of enjoying the spectacle to which Sir W. Scott invites us at the beginning of the second canto of the Lay. The moon arose to throw the magic of her light over these noble ruins, which delineated their shadow on the turf of the cemetery. Melrose Abbey appertains to the Gothic florid style. This superb convent was founded by King David in 1136, and dedicated to the Virgin. But for ages there had previously existed on the same spot, a still more ancient monastery, with which several fabulous traditions were connected.

King David conferred the new edifice on monks of the Cistertian order, who remained there up to the time of the reformation. Few kings have founded more religious establishments than King David, who having been, as he deserved, canonized by the monks, is called by the historians, a saint of fatal influence to the crown: but concessions must be made to the spirit of each successive age, and it must be confessed that David considered convents as one of the means of civilization. He guaranteed, moreover, the lands he conferred upon them from the continual invasions of the English, at that time at war with Scotland; and his subjects found in their vicinity an inviolable protection. David was an enlightened monarch, who has left a body of ordinances and laws as a monument of his

wisdom and legislative qualifications. It is easy to declaim against the monks; but in the same degree as they were opposed to actual civilization, they were benefactors of the people in periods of ignorance and barbarism. The monks of Melrose were not only learned, but they excelled in the mechanic and industrious arts. One prefers at the present day, a large manufactory to a monastery; but it would be easy to trace to the institution of some monastic building now in ruins the discovery of more than one useful machine, which time only has been enabled to improve.

As to the devastation of religious monuments, poetry does not stand alone in inveighing against it: Protestant England and Scotland dare at length to express their regret. Will it be believed that the anathema of the monks of Melrose has pursued, even to his extant posterity, that Thomson, who mutilated the Infant Jesus to which I have referred? The name of Stumpy* has been transmitted to his descendants, and more than one family have refused to ally themselves with theirs.

The ruins of Melrose are precious as an object of art; but the genius of a poet has conferred on them a new consecration. The *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, the *Monastery*, and the *Abbey*, ought for the future to protect them from every kind of Vandalism.

* In allusion to the effect of the palsy with which the arm of the sacrilegious defacer was visited. I quote the fact, trusting, however, that no bigot will avail himself of my book to advocate the law of sacrilege with which we are threatened.

The *Lay* is nothing but a picture of manners, and local interests. It will be scarcely believed that more than 30,000 copies were printed and sold by Constable. The *Monastery* revives some of the ideas and even persons of the poem. For example; Julien Avenel and Christie both recall William of Deloraine; but the subject no longer concerns a mere quarrel of clans. In the *Monastery*, we are made to take part in the grand political and religious drama of the Reformation.

That memorable struggle, which brought all the passions into play, agitates the court as well as the church; the dungeon-keep of the feudal chief as well as the hut of the lowest of his vassals. The general ferment produced by the crisis excites all minds and imparts real importance to the most trivial incidents; for all refer to the grand question which has sprung up. Each individual character is therefore more struck out. The slightest detail of manners adds to the general effect of the picture of all classes of society at that epoch. How much that effect is further heightened by the contrast of characters! Lady Blanche may be condemned. The poet has too much mistrusted the incredulity of the public in the nineteenth century; it was requisite to personify, in a freer, and less indecisive manner, one of the numerous local superstitions, which gave him the idea of this fantastic personage.

From the casements of Abbotsford Sir Walter surveyed Eildon Hill, a mountain separated into three conical summits by the wand of Michael Scott,

and the Goblin Burn, where Thomas the Rhymer had his rendezvous with the Fairy Queen. But banishing Lady Blanche from the *Monastery*, there still remain the highly comic characters of Father Boniface, and the Sacristan, the buoyant Halbert, and the melancholy Edward, Julien Avenel and Christie, the attractive *Molinara*, and that model of the dandies of his age, Piercy Shafton; but more especially Father Eustace, and Henry Warden, &c.

Melrose Abbey takes the name of Kennaquhair in the romance. Sir Walter intended to put his readers at fault by this change of name; but he has painted the entire landscape with rigorous fidelity. I write on the spot, and can safely say that there is not in Roxburghshire any other Kennaquhair than Melrose, with its cloisters richly adorned with Gothic* ornaments; situated on the Tweed, in a spot where its waters appear to make an elbow in order to return towards their source;† commanded by mountains towards the south,‡ &c. In fine, in one of the deeds of the abbey, one Robert Avenel is mentioned as *familiaris Noster*. We must also look here for the locale of Captain Clutterbuck, who was barely polite in omitting to name in his introduction so well known a neighbour as the Castellan of Abbotsford, and in not even borrowing a short quotation from his poetry.

* Monastery, vol. III. c. 9. † Ibid. c. 1.
‡ Ibid. vol. III. c. 4.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

TO M. ACH. BOSQUET.

THERE is no spot in all Roxburghshire, where I now am, which does not deserve describing. This shire has been appropriately called the Arcadia of Scotland; the mountains are often denominated the Highlands of the South. The scene, in general, smiles as we approach them; their forms are not characterised by aught that is severe or abrupt; the vallies are especially graceful and verdant; in short, the whole spot is pastoral, the aspect of the country and the manners of the inhabitants. The same character is to be found in their superstitions and poetry; for passing over Sir Walter Scott, who belongs to the whole of Scotland, the Scotch Arcadia has its special poet, James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. You will ask me what there is of pastoral character in the ancestors of the Scotts, living as moss-troopers. I will reply, that civilization has changed the habits of these families, which formerly were incessantly under arms; but seen through the perspective of the past, the times of feudal anarchy supply the modern ballads with reminiscences which save from monotony a poetry rather descriptive and affluent

in imagery, than connected with the feelings and the passions, and which has moreover lost the originality of primitive inspiration.

I this morning continued my excursion through Roxburghshire, and even explored a portion of Selkirkshire. Jedburgh Abbey deserves to be mentioned after that of Melrose. It is not of so perfect an architectural style; the ruins of Melrose, besides, derive an inexpressible grace from the extensive landscape which serves them as a frame. Jedburgh is enveloped in a more solemn light by the oaks, pines, and elms, by which it is environed. This latter abbey, situated in a kind of peninsula, formed by the Tweed, increased by the waters of the Jed, was one of the religious foundations of King David, who peopled it with regular canons from Beauvais, in France. The present proprietor of the monastery is jealous of its preservation. One of the courts is converted into a productive orchard, of which Earl Buchan is not less chary than of the ruins. A direction board admonishes the stranger, that he is not to deviate from the paths, for fear of encountering a steel trap or spring gun. I am inclined to think, that these homicidal precautions, with which English landed property is covered, are not of monastic invention.

I visited the charming lake of St. Mary, described in *Marmion*, and with still intenser interest recognized an old ruined fortress, which its peculiar site often brings to the eye in the horizon of Roxburghshire. It is the tower of Smallholm,

once the property of the Pringle family, and in the 17th century, that of Sir William Scott of Harden, who possessed the neighbouring domain of Mertown. It is there that Sir Walter Scott has laid the scene of his ballad entitled the *Eve of St. John.* Smallholm is subsequently celebrated as the castle of Avenel, in the *Monastery* and the *Abbot.*

Towards the middle of the last century, Mr. Robert Scott, of Sandyknow, grandfather of the poet, a distinguished agriculturist, and proud of the character, became the farming tenant of his cousin, Scott of Harden, and the domain of Smallholm Craigs. The father of Sir Walter was a skilful *Writer of the Signet* at Edinburgh; but Sir Walter passed a great portion of his infancy at Smallholm, with his grandfather. It was there that, notwithstanding the fall he had from the arms of his nurse, a fall which has rendered him a cripple for life, he so fortified his constitution by exercise on horseback and on foot, that he is at once an indefatigable walker, and an equestrian worthy of the Scotts and Rutherfords, his ancestors. It was there also that Sir W., still a boy, delighted in furnishing his memory with the tales of his nurse, and some old grandames deeply versed in the local traditions. But let us listen to himself, describing his first impressions. These reminiscences of infancy possess a great charm in the works of a poet, who generally avoids, with marked care, the introduction of his own affairs on the stage. The introductory chapters of *Marmion* are, consequently,

separate poems, which appertain at once to the epistle, the elegy, and the ode; they alternately exhibit the simple and unpretending style of a friendly conversation, the expression of a tender melancholy, and the inspirations of a great poet.

Subjoined is the manner in which he explains the secret of his first verses.

"Thus, while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charmed me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charmed my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song;
Though sigh no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claimed homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall flower grew,
And honey-suckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruined wall.
I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round surveyed;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvelled, as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitched my mind,

Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurred their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And home returning filled the hall
With revel, wassell-route, and brawl.—
Methought that still with tramp and clang
The gate-way's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features seamed with scars,
Glared through the window's rusty bars.
And ever by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' sleights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretched at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic rank of war displayed;
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scattered Southron fled before.

"Still, with vain fondness, could I trace,
Anew, each kind familiar face,
That brightened at our evening fire;
From the thatched mansion's grey-haired Sire,
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Shewed what in youth its glance had been;
Whose doom discording neighbours sought,
Content with equity unbought;
To him the venerable Priest,
Our frequent and familiar guest,
Whose life and manners well could paint
Alike the student and the saint;

Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
With gambol rude and timeless joke:
For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-will'd imp, a grandame's child;
But half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, carest."

I cannot express all the pleasure I derive from the perusal of this passage, when I date my letter from the same spot where the bard delighted in recalling the thoughts of his infancy. But independent of this *apropos*, independent of the beauty of the poetry itself, I associate with it a personal feeling, a fire-side recollection. I also, notwithstanding time and distance, picture to myself the Alps of St. Reney,* the valley watered by the Oriol; a valley of the same pastoral character as that of the Tweed; the farm of my maternal grandfather, an agriculturist also, and proud of the designation; and my good grandmother and mother smiling on my sports, and quietly bidding me be silent, when I giddily interrupted the discourse of my great uncle the canon. Our fireside also assembled guests replete with *bonhomie*, whose features engraven on my memory, I delight in retracing.

* A little village of Provence, of which a cardinal, exiled there by the Pope, said, *bello paese, cattivo gente.*

LETTER LXXXIX.

TO M. GUIZOT.

THE magician, Michael Scott, being much embarrassed what to do with a demon, for whom he was compelled to provide continual occupation, ordered him to build a bridge over the Tweed; and in one night the work was completed. Earl Buchan has, it seems, aspired at vying with the infernal architect, by his iron bridge thrown over the river at Dryburgh Abbey. This bridge, which is a of a light and elegant form, is not, perhaps, in entire harmony with the gothic arches of the Abbey; but it surpasses the Devil's Bridge, at Kelso; the devil, on the other hand, might easily have his revenge, by erecting a rival statue to that which the Earl has dedicated to Sir W. Wallace, on a rock on the banks of the Tweed; a colossus worthy of the Hygeia of Bernard's Well.

The mountain which commands Melrose, once rose in solitude on the south of the convent. Michael Scott desired his demon to separate it into three parts, and from that time, Eildon Hill is composed of three conical summits.

From the top of Eildon Hill, thirty miles of landscape may be surveyed. The shepherd who accompanied me to the summit, made me particu-

larly remark the course of the Leader, and on its banks, the pretended ruins of Ercildoun, a manor of Thomas the Rhymer, whom the fairy queen transported to her kingdom of fairie land.

The chivalresque *Romance of Tristan*, by Thomas the Rymer, is a curious relic of English poetry, in the 13th century; an entire poem, composed by a Scotchman, in the language of old Chaucer. An age later, the harp of Thomas fell to the lot of the ecclesiastic, Barbour, who made the hero of Scotland, Robert Bruce, the hero of a Romance in verse, often cited as an authority by writers. Barbour wrote in the 14th century. The following century was rich in chroniclers, or *makers*, among whom, the antiquarians and poets delight in boasting of Henry the Blind, who chose Wallace as the subject of a chronicle, which may serve as an appendage to that of Barbour; Bishop Gawain Douglas, who translated the *Eneid*; James I., a poetical crowned head, who may, perhaps, be considered as the inventor of Scotch pastoral poetry; Dunbar, to whom his satirical vein, and smiling fancy, inspired productions, reminding us at once of Chaucer and Butler, the author of *Hudibras*; and finally, under James V., David Lindsay, who enacts a part in *Marmion*, as Scotch king at arms. Persecuted by the cathclic clergy, and sent into banishment, D. Lindsay returned at a later period, to serve the cause of religious reform, by his burlesque poems, the wit of which is not always in excellent taste.

All these Scotch poets had the defects peculiar

to their time; they were, indeed, less delicate than their predecessors and contemporaries of England, whom they style their masters. The two literatures, blended at that time into one and the same language, with the exception of a few Scotticisms. These Scotticisms augmented in number, till the time of Ramsay; or, perhaps it may rather be said that the English language becoming more cultivated, left the Scotch stationary; for from the period of the accession of James I. to the throne of England, the Scotch muse appears to have been cursed with barrenness.

Even at Edinburgh, the pedantic James had rejected the common language of the people as too vulgar, in order to bring a dead language into fashion. Buchanan was a man of genius, who subjected his imagination and knowledge to Latin, when he might have done for the Scotch language what Dante did for the Italian. On ascending the throne of England, James affected to speak pure English, though he never could get rid of his provincial accent. During three quarters of a century, Scotch literature was reduced to its ballads, despised by the *beau monde*, as well as by its poets. When Thomson, Mallet, &c. made themselves Englishmen by their poetry, the union of the two kingdoms was completed. The last attempts of the Stuarts revived the national pride of the Highlanders, and that of the inhabitants of the towns and Lowlands. The old ditties of the jacobites constituted a protest in favour of the independence of Scotland, and the language of their

fathers. These old ballads, indeed, produced a moving effect on the partizans of the House of Brunswick. When all hope of restoration was lost to the Pretender, many of the Scotch whigs rallied round the abortive creed of the Stuartists, as if it were a kind of poetical religion. It was in this spirit that Burns sung the misfortunes of Mary Stuart and the Pretender. Such is, also, the secret of the jacobitism imputed to Sir W. Scott and his pupil, James Hogg, who are in other respects so devoted to the House of Brunswick.

The jacobitism of Allan Ramsay was marked by more real and unaffected characteristics. This poet, the first to whom the Scotch muse, after eighty years of silence, was finally indebted for the return of its ancient honours, was born in 1686, and was a witness of the great events of 1715 and 1745. He had been persecuted and calumniated by the fanatical clergy of the Presbyterian sect, for having intended to establish a theatre at Edinburgh. His detestation against ultra-presbyterianism influenced, therefore, somewhat his devotion to the Stuarts. But his poems have no political character. It is not, however, without secret meaning, that he has depicted in his *Gentle Shepherd* the shepherds of Charles II.'s time at the epoch of the restoration of the Stuarts. A series of songs in honour of the restoration follow. The return of an emigrant nobleman, is, perhaps, the true object of this pastoral drama, all the charms of which, in other respects, consist in isolated scenes which compose a series of eclogues, slightly

strung together. The portrait which the *Gentle Shepherd* sketches of his mistress, has all the grace of the *malo me Galatea petit* of Virgil: the plaid and the flute which the two shepherds exchange, remind one also of the mutual presents in the Greek and Latin *Bucolics*. In another charming scene two shepherdesses are introduced, discussing the subjects of love and marriage. There is a truly antique simplicity in this dialogue, founded on perfectly modern ideas. But the Scotch are chiefly pleased in this pastoral with the employment of their dialect and the couplets, which, set to national tunes, have become as popular as the stanzas of Tasso in Italy. They boast much, as an excellence of the language ennobled by Ramsay, Ferguson, and Burns, of those diminutives which are almost unknown in England, and which soften the termination of a variety of words, which a consonant penultima would render inharmonious.* In other respects, Ramsay had neither the spirit, nor the energy, nor the glow of Burns; he has depicted manners rather than passions and characters. He had published, before his *Gentle Shepherd*, a valuable collection of old Scotch poems, among which he introduced some of his own productions, which are not less esteemed. He is the Theocritus of Scotland. We shall re-discover traces of him on the banks of the Clyde.

* Such as *bit, bittie, little bit; bairn, child, bairnie, little child; lass, lassie, little girl.* On the other hand, the Gaelic tongue has imparted some harsh expressions to the Lowland dialect.

It has been said of Ferguson, who succeeded him, that he has written town eclogues. He resided less in the country than at Edinburgh, and was more pleased with the company of the citizens than with that of the shepherds. His *Farmer's Ingle* is, nevertheless, a true pastoral; but Ferguson's style of wit has more affinity with Burns than with Ramsay or Hogg, of whom it is high time to speak, since I am now on his domains and on those of his master, Walter Scott. Burns and Ferguson will be noticed in turn.

The Scotch greatly eulogize the grave demeanour of their peasants, their severe morals, and their religious enthusiasm, resulting from their daily perusal of the Bible, which imparts occasionally to their language an oriental colouring. This character, which is a relic of puritan austerity, is no slight constituent of the tiresome dignity, or reserve of some of the Edinburgh drawing-rooms. I have not yet been enabled sufficiently to study the aspect which it imparts to the families of the farmers' labourers, and of the little domestic establishments of the hamlets; but it is worthy commemoration; that the poets sprung from the class of Scotch peasantry, have constituted personification of very opposite manners and ideas. Burns did not seek for an asylum against his misfortunes in religion. The last days of his life exhibit him in the act of trying to drown his recollection in orgies, which were finally fatal; and James Hogg is quoted as the most decided whiskey drinker throughout Scotland. The Presbyterian

bigots treat Burns as an infidel, and I have heard them murmur, that Mr. Hogg as a poet is sometimes a little too profane. Their chosen Laureat is Graham, the pious author of the *Sabbath*, to whom I shall subsequently refer. It is but just to add, that Mr. Hogg has only become *sensual* in his poetry since the reputation of his first poems attracted him to Edinburgh. His youth was that of a shepherd, living a life of solitude and contemplation with his flock and his muses—that is to say, with the fairies, which no poet of Scotland, from the time of Thomas of Erceldoune, has depicted with so many fascinations. It was this pastoral life, passed upon his native mountains,—a life of tranquillity and reflection, far from the bustle of the world,—which familiarized James Hogg betimes with all the imagery of material nature, the various incidental appearances of which, in the rural landscape before his eyes, varying as they did with the hours of the day and night, and the difference of the seasons, modified the variable form in his imagination. The local spots where he first became a poet, appeared to him like the friends of his solitude, and the remembrance of the stories told to his early infancy, assisted him in peopling them with the invisible beings of popular tradition. At that time he was probably ignorant even of the existence of Oxford and Cambridge; still more of the mythology of Athens and Rome, taught in those colleges. It was, in short, this contemplative life which explains why James Hogg was so long ignorant of men, and succeeded

better in depicting simple and tender emotions than the passions, and imaginary beings than historical personages. When he aspired to imitate Sir W. Scott in novel writing, he failed. An allusion to some actual fact, or some historical hero, is not out of place in his poetry; but he is unable to analyse the heart of a Claverhouse or a Burley.

The Ettrick shepherd published his first essay in 1805. It was a volume of ballads. Sir Walter Scott had then published, among his other works, his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, for some of the ballads in which he was indebted to the memory of the young poet who had made him his model. The original ballads of James Hogg had little success. Burns had rendered his countryman fastidious, even for a department of poetry which greatly differed from his own. The poems of James Hogg were therefore considered, in some quarters, diffuse, tame, prosaic, and even trite. Hogg, desirous of pleasing in the drawing-room, abandoned his flock, to establish himself at Edinburgh and grow polite. Neither did his muse become enervated by the change; she retained her originality, while she acquired graces which she did not before possess. Some traces of his primitive rusticity now and then exhibit themselves, and the poet himself sometimes reminds one in his deportment of the rustic air of the peasant of the Danube.

James Hogg contributed, at first, to a periodical journal called the *Spy*, and has since become one

of the contributors to *Blackwood's Magazine.* His best articles are descriptive pieces in prose, and little sketches of pastoral manners. He has depicted, with great fidelity, a storm on the banks of the Tweed, and a fall of snow; he also enacts occasionally, in that comico-serious publication, the character of a *rustic buffoon.* He permits his caricatured portrait to be printed in it, with sonnets beneath in his praise, such as that entitled, *Sonnet on a Spark from the Pipe of the Ettrick Shepherd.*

But the reputation of James Hogg is founded upon a long poem, which Sir Walter Scott might not be ashamed to avow; the *Queen's Wake.*

The meeting which took place on the eve before the day of the consecration of a church was formerly called a *Wake,* in England. This meeting was a festival, and those who attended passed the night in various kinds of games and amusements. In Scotland, which was always a land of song and music, says Mr. Hogg,* song and music were the principal diversions of the wake, and often the only one. These songs were generally religious or serious compositions, adapted to the simple melodies of Scotland. Such is nearly the origin of our old *noëls* in France. The different applications of the word in England and Scotland, sufficiently explain what were the consequences of the wake in the two countries.

In England the wakes have led to the establish-

* First note of the poem.

ment of fairs or *fêtes* of long duration, whence the word wake has become synonymous with fair or festival. In Scotland, the same term is only applicable, at present, to the serenades performed by ambulant and anonymous minstrels, who go round the wealthy quarters of Edinburgh after midnight at Christmas. Such is nearly all that remains of the ancient wakes in Scotland.. After having confessed my barbarous taste for the spinnet, I can scarcely be expected to differ in opinion with the Ettrick Shepherd, on the subject of those wandering minstrels, who, in Scotland, as elsewhere, supply such agreeable associations to the *dilettanti* of all classes. How often have I thought, when delighted by one of these concerts in the open air, that a Mozart or a Rossini, betrayed by their destiny, were condemned to take a part in them. Who is the most interesting person in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel?* To my view it is the personage, who is scarcely admitted within the doors of the poetical structure,—that old bard, who, poor, humiliated, and vagabond, begged his bread from door to door, and tuned for the ears of the peasant, the harp which the king had formerly been delighted to hear. This very morning I beheld with emotion, on the banks of the Yarrow, that tower of Newark, where the good Duchess of Buccleugh revived with him her hospitalities and compassionate encouragement.

Queen's Wake is the narrative of one of those royal watches

"When royal Mary, blithe of mood,
Kept holiday at Holyrood,"

and commences with an affecting invocation to the poet's harp. It is a natural reversion to the simple pleasures of the country, and the first mysterious commerce with his muse. His little grain of ambition may be pardoned, as we pardon that of Fontaine's shepherd, in *Le Roi et le Berger ;* because he never ceases loving at the bottom of his heart,

"L'habit d'un gardeur de troupeau,
Petit chapeau, jupon, panetierre, houlette," &c.

But the shepherd is now about to sing of ambition in others, and of their efforts to deserve the royal favour: it is the beautiful Mary Stuart who holds the sceptre, and adjudges the prize to the most skilful. She has just arrived at Leith, and proceeds to Holyrood-house. The hearts of all her subjects fly to meet her, and the general talk is of her beauty, her youth, and her afflictions. She has been an exile; she has lost, in one year, a father, a husband, and a kingdom, and has not yet attained her eighteenth spring. Who would not devote his life for so young, so beautiful, and so amiable a princess?

She advances with a numerous retinue to Holyrood-house: and though affected and delighted with the universal homage she receives, and with the acclamations of the people, an air of abstraction is occasionally remarked in her countenance.

This abstraction was occasioned by the accents of her native music, which, mellowed by distance, were conveyed to her delighted ear, and seemed to her preferable to all the scientific melodies of the south. The above sentiment, imparted to Mary Stuart by Mr. Hogg, is one of perfect delicacy. Alas! he will soon have to apprise us that Rizzio composes a part of the retinue at Holyrood. The Duke of Argyle, informed of the subject of the queen's emotion, boasts of the Highland music as far superior to that which she has just heard. As soon as Mary has established her court at Holyrood, a proclamation announces, that during the following Christmas, the queen invites to a solemn wake, all the minstrels and harpers of the kingdom. This wake is to last three successive nights, and a richly ornamented harp is destined for the victor. Mr. Hogg then depicts the character, and records the song of each of the competitors. Rizzio is among the number; but Gardyne, a son of the native bards, obtains the prize. This plot supplies the Ettrick Shepherd with an opportunity of exhibiting the facility with which he adapts himself to all kinds of styles,—a facility so great, that he has since published, under the title of *The Mirror of the Poets*, a collection of poems attributed by him to Byron, Scott, Campbell, Southey, Crabbe, Wordsworth, &c., whose peculiar genius he has often imitated so dexterously, as to constitute a complete deception. As to the *Queen's Wake*, the critics have generally preferred to the successful piece in the competition,

that of the thirteenth competitor, entitled, *Kilmeny*. It is one of those marvellous subjects in which Mr. Hogg excels, and which have carned him the title of Laureat of Fairy Land. Burns, when he treated of some supernatural history, always introduced some comic, and even grotesque, imagery. The fact is, he *did not* believe; but Hogg writes with the enthusiasm of faith. Nothing can be more simply pleasing than the poem of *Kilmeny*.

Kilmeny is a young girl, replete with innocence and beauty, who has disappeared, and been carried away by fairies. The portrait which Mr. Hogg draws, invests her with all the grace and candour of the *Girl at the Well*, designed by Westall, and engraved by C. Heath. She returns mysteriously, and the art of the poet consists in persuading us in some degree of the fact of her sojourn in Fairy Land, by the animated description he gives of her person, and the surprise, combined with respect, which her return and aspect inspire.

"Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?
Lang hae we sought baith holt and den;
By linn, by ford, and green-wood tree,
Yet you are halesome and fair to see.
Where gat you that joup o' the lily scheen?
That bonny snook of the birk sae green?
And these roses, the fairest that ever were seen?
Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?

"Kilmeny looked up with a lovely grace,
But nae smile was seen on Kilmeny's face;
As still was her look, and as still was her ee,
As the stillness that lay on the emerant lea,
Or the mist that sleeps on a waveless sea.

For Kilmeny had been she knew not where,
And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare;
Kilmeny had been where the cock never crew,
Where the r.in never fell, and the wind never blew,
But it seemed as the harp of the sky had rung,
And the airs of heaven played round her tongue,
When she spake of the lovely forms she had seen,
And a land where sin had never been;
A land of love and a land of light,
Withouten sun, or moon, or night:
Where the river swa'd a living stream,
And the light a pure celestial beam:
The land of vision it would seem,
A still, an everlasting dream."

After describing the bower where Kilmeny was sleeping, before she awaked in the kingdom of enchantment, the poet represents her as charmed by mysterious hymns. She awakes on a silken couch, resplendent with the colours of the rainbow, and around her are flying winged beings of celestial beauty, who are smiling and conversing about her. One of them apprises the rest that Kilmeny has been conveyed to these enchanted regions, in order to shew that a virgin as pure as Kilmeny partook of the nature of celestial spirits.

She is loaded with caresses, and receives a kind of consecration, as a pledge of her immortality. The future is revealed to her; and she is permitted to return to earth occasionally, when she experiences a desire of re-assuring her friends on the subject of her condition. This reminiscence of the place of her birth is highly affecting in the midst of the enjoyments with which she is intoxicated. The same idea, in a subject nearly similar

has been expressed with still greater pathos by one of the Lake poets, now a professor of philosophy at Edinburgh, Mr. John Wilson. *(Lay of Fairy Land.)*

Kilmeny returns among her companions; but she leads the life of a fairy, or an angel, protected from passions and vain desires, always worthy of the celestial country to which she belongs, and whither she is destined to return at the end of seven years, in order to be united with the choir of celestial spirits. The whole of this vision is got up with great effect; but it may be readily conceived that so simple a plot stands in need of the charms of verse, in order to excite interest; Mr. Hogg has discovered and employed the secret of Thomas Moore's harmony, in depicting and supplying language to his Kilmeny.

There is something more solemn in the ballad of Mackinnon, which introduces us to the pompous wonders of the cave of Staffa. It comprises the history of an Abbot of Iona, who has introduced a mistress into the cloister under the disguise of a novice. The younger monks of his community live in scandalous familiarity with the nuns of a neighbouring monastery; while the elder ones scandalized at their conduct, tremble, lest heaven should punish the whole fraternity for the violation of the monastic regulations. In fact an apparition of St. Columba orders the prior to go on a pilgrimage, with his young monks, to Staffa, in order to offer certain oblations to the invisible spirit of the ocean; and the super

stitious abbot obeys this order, although in contradiction to the creed both of Columba and himself. He embarks, and in reply, to his invocation, a mermaid denounces, in harmonious song, that the billows demand him as their prey. The prior and his retinue hurry from the spot, overwhelmed with melancholy forebodings. They perceive at the helm of the vessel an old man, whose aspect appears to them supernatural.

They enquire his business and his name; whence he comes and where he goes: but he preserves a gloomy silence, turns his face towards the sea and weeps. One monk addresses him in friendly terms; another mocks him; but the abbot turns pale, overwhelmed with terror; for he imagines that he has seen the man before. At length the vessel quits the fatal shore. The old man then raising his eyes to heaven, exclaims, "the hour is come." The monks perceive, on the top of Ben More, an apparition with a girdle of azure lightning, and a luminous helmet. It is the herald of the storm; and he exclaims "Prepare the way for the Abbot of Iona." A tempest rises, and the vessel is engulphed in the waves, &c.

This mysterious old man, whom the poet does not name, leaves a striking impression on the imagination. The poem often recalls to mind the energy of Byron, combined with the fantastic mysticism of Coleridge.

The ballad of Mary Scott also deserves quoting. Mary is another Juliet, condemned to death by

her father; she has swallowed instead of poison, a narcotic potion, which gives her lover time to come to her deliverance. Her lover, who believes her dead, is in the act of addressing an affecting farewell to her in her coffin, when she revives. The moment of revival is felicitously described by Mr. Hogg. I may also quote his imaginative voyage by sea of a Fifeshire witch; but of quoting there would be no reasonable limits. I apprehend that I have said enough to shew that he prefers marvellous subjects and susperstitious traditions to all others. The Ettrick Shepherd is not precisely a Bucolic poet; at least, if he were familiar with Virgil, he would be inclined to admire him most in his description of the prodigies announcing the death of Cæsar, his account of the metamorphoses of Proteus, and Orpheus's descent into hell. Even in the purely descriptive portion of his poems, the Ettrick Shepherd is frequently induced to modify by foreign allusion, the artlessness of a landscape. He has an obvious tendency towards the orientalism of Thomas Moore; had he studied Thomson and Cowper, he would have imitated the first in his pomp of imagery and diction.

An English poet, who is just dead, and whom the muse first discovered in the shop of an artizan,—Robert Bloomfield,—has been more remarkable perhaps as a shoemaker, than a poet. Many passages, however, of his pastorals display the true poet in the unartificial style. He depicts with tolerable success a flock of sheep,

a young shepherd, the humble details of the farm, &c.; but his genius remains concentered within a narrow circle; his fancy creeps along the ground, and rarely rises to a new idea. It is not sufficient for a painter to be exact in his sketch: vivacity of colouring also enters into the proper details of the painting. There exists a descriptive poetry, which only speaks to the senses, if I may so express myself; this is often the character of that of Bloomfield: there exists another, which associates with the delineation of a landscape or of a country life, emotions of the heart; this is the style more of contemplative than descriptive poets. To this latter class may be assigned the works of another plebeian poet, named John Clare, who has lately become the rival of Bloomfield in England. The true source of our love for the country exists in an association of ideas. The *periwinkle* is not the sweetest of flowers; but it recalls to mind the image of Madame Warens; it excites our enthusiasm more than the rose, and we exclaim with transport, "there is the *periwinkle!*"

LETTER XC.

TO M. CASSIMER DELAVIGNE.

I COULD not return to Edinburgh without deviating from my road, in order to pass a few hours at Roslyn, situated at seven miles distance from the capital. It is fashionable to make at least one excursion there annually during the summer months, in order to eat strawberries, and admire the Saxo-Gothic chapel, where the Saint-Clairs repose in their armour, instead of coffins. During life, they inhabited the old castle, now in decay; an edifice less durable than the sepulchre, where their corpses are still, according to report, entire, and astonish by their gigantic height. The enumeration of their titles, says Walter Scott, would take away the breath of a herald; among others, they were princes of the Orcades, Dukes of Oldenburgh, Lord Admirals of the Scotch seas, grand justiciaries of the kingdom, wardens of the border, Earls of Caithness, titularies of more than fifty baronies, &c. Founded by William Saint-Clair in 1446, the chapel is remarkable on the outside for spiral pinnacles, united by spring arches, and on the inside, for its elegant columns, all differently sculptured, of which the spiral column of the apprentice principally attracts the attention of visitors.*

* The architect had travelled over Europe to find a model for the pillar which remained to be constructed. In his absence, his appren-

The valley of Roslyn is worthy of the chapel; it is as it were an oasis, circumscribed by a framework of rocks, with scarped angles. They have been shaken, and violently torn by some commotion of nature, and seem to menace the visitor with the sudden fall of fragments feebly bound together by the branches of trees, the foliage of which conceals a part of their numerous fissures.

By following the course of the Esk, I arrived, botanizing as I went, at Hawthornden. The grassy carpet I trod was agreeably variegated with violets, primroses, the periwinkle, and that pretty flower, the Easter daisy, which inspired Burns with so pathetic a *meditation*. I gathered some wild strawberries, and those berries of the *Arbutus*, called by us *raisins d'ours*, but more especially the *vaccinium* of Virgil, which I have so often found under the popular name of *Mauret* or *Petavin* on the banks of the Rhone. The Valley of Hawthornden is celebrated in Scotland as the asylum where the poet Drummond of Hawthornden lived in seclusion, and played the part of a hospitable host to Shakspeare's rival, Ben Jonson. This reminiscence brings me back to Edinburgh, into the company of Sir W. Scott and that of Mr. Crabbe, his guest.

tice executed it, and on his return the master killed his pupil out of jealousy. The same story is told of the beautiful window of Melrose.

M M. Bouton and Daguerre have just exhibited their picture of Roslyn. A Scotchman might fancy, on seeing it, that they had carried the chapel itself to Paris.

It would seem as if my two days of absence had operated great changes in the Athens of Scotland. The positive announcement of the approaching departure of the king has been received. The only question now is about receiving him and being received by him: 200,000 strangers have already tripled the population. Glasgow, Aberdeen, Perth, Dundee have arrived; that is to say, the provosts, baillies, magistrates, and other principal magistrates of those cities which are somewhat humbled by the preference awarded to Edinburgh over them. Nor is it the tradesmen only, belonging to the Highland Society, who strut about in the Celtic costume; but the chiefs themselves, with their *tails*,* have descended from the mountains, and groupes of these children of the wilderness are standing astonished before the shops, or public buildings of the New Town. They are known by the particular colours of the bars of their plaids for Campbells, who wear besides a branch of myrtle in their cap, or for Drummonds, who adorn theirs with holly. The chiefs alone add to this vegetable cockade (I hope they will pardon me the expression) two eagle's feathers, which compose an elegant plume. I went yesterday to pay my respects to a whig, who had but recently expressed a most disloyal distaste for George IV.: "The king," said he, "is undoubtedly the first gentleman of the kingdom. He is represented as

* The Tail of a chief consists of the officers of his establishment, his henchman, or secretary-squire, the piper or bagpipe player, &c. &c.

very affable." The Lady of M. Mac—— has repeated this phrase to him so often, that the husband has promised to let her go to the king's levee, and to go himself. Thence I proceeded to the house of Dr. Rob——n, who had engaged to take me this very day to the Medical Society; the party was put off till the next day; the doctor, who is a great loyalist, was obliged to go and join the Archers' Company, to which he belongs, and which enjoys the privilege of acting as his majesty's body guard when he is in Edinburgh. He shewed me his bow, put on his waistcoat and trowsers of green tartan, enveloped himself in his plaid, handled his bow with grace, and asked me whether the *costume* were not charming. I replied that it became him marvellously well; and, indeed, my compliment was deserved, as the doctor is a fine figure.

All this bustle, these festive preparations, these metamorphoses of costumes, and new physiognomies amused me at first; but my philosopher, who enjoyed it for three days, is already tired of it; and has testified an anxious desire of setting out on our projected excursion to the Highlands, in order not to return to Edinburgh till after the king's journey. He had almost induced me to be of his opinion. I do not like to see the provincial population too much *endimanchés*, that is to say, out of its ordinary customs. We shall read, thought I, the relation of the *fêtes* in the gazettes; the police does not dictate here, as in France, their *proces verbal*. I then proceeded

to the house of Sir Walter Scott, with the intention of taking my leave of him. My visit was tolerably long, for I was obliged to accept his invitation to sit down to dinner with him. I shall relate a portion of our conversation before and after dinner, without any other infidelity than that of bringing passages together, which I cannot transmit to paper in their isolated state, except by preceding them with long explanations, or useless and insignificant transitions.

Sir W. Scott.—"Well, doctor, how did you like the banks of the Tweed and Melrose Abbey?"

"They are worthy of the bard who has sung them. I, besides, paid a visit to Abbotsford, and surveyed with interest your gothic sculptures, your armoury and pictures, some of which are speaking representations. I shall now re-peruse with double pleasure, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and your other works."

Sir W. Scott.—"Are you acquainted with the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border?*"

"A great part of it; but more especially with your own imitations of the old border ballads. It was, I believe, your first publication.

Sir W. Scott.—"Not exactly. I made my *debut* in 1799,* with an imitation of some ballads of Burger, and a translation of the chevalresque drama of *Goethe, Gotz Von Berlichengen.* These essays procured me the acquaintance of the famous Lewis, author of the *Monk*, and sur-

* Sir W. Scott was then twenty-eight, being born in 1771

named Monk Lewis. He was a very agreeable man, whose imagination was perfectly amorous of the supernatural, and of popular superstitions. I read to him my *Eve of St. John* and *Glenfinglas;* and he requested my permission to insert these two poems in his *Tales of Wonder.*"

"I should apprehend that the *Monk* of Lewis is a little out of fashion."

Sir W. Scott.—"It is a work written with power. It produced an effect, although it came after the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe. Like the latter, Lewis has chosen the south as the seat of his action: in a southern atmosphere, passions as well as vegetation have more energy; passion is wanted in these kind of works. The marvellous alone will not suffice for so sceptical an age as this. I should have liked Mrs. Radcliffe more, if she had been less anxious about the explanation of her mysteries. Lewis wrote as if he believed."

"Might not Mrs. Radcliffe, as a woman, be in dread of passing for superstitious?"

Sir W. Scott.—"It may be so. Her works, compared with the common novel, are what melo-drames are compared with tragedies and comedies. Terror is their chief spring of action. But there are some good melo-drames. Walpole created the melo-dramatic romance; but Mrs. Radcliffe surpassed Walpole. Lewis and Maturin have alone come near Mrs. Radcliffe. The *Montorio Family* is a very astonishing work."*

* Sir W. Scott has been a useful patron of the Rev. Mr. Maturin.

"Was your *Gotz von Berlichengen* published at Edinburgh?"

Sir W. Scott.—"No, I published it at London, where I then was. It is from the same epoch that my acquaintance with M. M. Canning and Frere commenced."*

"You have contributed to transfer a portion of the English bookselling business to Edinburgh."

Sir W. Scott.—"Authors doubtless make publishers; but Mr. Arch. Constable has done much for Scotch authorship."

"Scotland has always supplied great men to the literary republic."

Sir W. Scott.—"The patriarch of our authors is Mr. Henry Mackenzie, who knew Hume and Robertson intimately. In his *Life of John Home*, lately published, he has charmingly described the Literary Society of Edinburgh during the second half of the last century. He is a poet and romance writer; a poet in versification; but a poet also in his prose fictions; indeed, it is difficult for a good romance writer not to be so in some degree. Mr. Mackenzie is an ingenious critic in his periodical Essays, (the *Mirror* and *Trifler*,) and a pathetic author in his novels. There is a little of Sterne's manner in his *Man of Feeling*; the pathos of *Julia de Roubigné* is more natural and pure."

"Scotland continues to enrich English literature with its best works. Thomas Campbell is a Scotchman?"

* Sir W. Scott was a fellow-contributor with Canning and Frere in the *Anti-Jacobin*.

Sir W. Scott.—"A Scotchman and a great poet. Lord Byron is also a little Scotch."

"May I ask you on what terms you are?"

Sir W. Scott.—"I received a letter from him yesterday. We are in correspondence, and that of an amicable and intimate description."

"He has scoffed a little at Scotland."

Sir W. Scott.—"The review went much too far. Lord Byron is very irritable."

"I saw the portrait of Mr. Jeffrey at Abbotsford. I presume you are friendly."

"Yes; he is one of our literary notables, and a distinguished barrister."

"Have you also appeared at the bar?"

Sir W. Scott.—"Like all young barristers, I have pleaded on criminal trials?"

I shall here add from the authority of Mr. Lockhart, that Sir W. Scott, when called to the bar at the age of twenty-one, gave but few testimonies of his talent. He once, however, had an opportunity of speaking before the General Assembly, and the question he treated of having suddenly kindled his powers, he expressed himself with a *flood of eloquence*. The famous Dr. Blair was present, and said aloud, "This young barrister will be a great man."

I resume our dialogue. "You quitted pleading for a judicial situation."

Sir W. Scott—"I was not appointed Clerk of the Court of Session till after I had published *Marmion*. I was already Sheriff of Selkirkshire."

This post brings Sir Walter in about 300*l.* per

annum, and he was indebted for it to the Buccleugh family. He was afterwards appointed deputy-lieutenant of Roxburghshire. Sir Walter Scott owed his nomination of Clerk to the Court of Session to Pitt, who was superseded by Fox before the nomination was signed and sealed. On its presentation to Fox for signature, he approved it without hesitation. "It is providing," said he, "for a man of genius; the precedent cannot be dangerous to us." It must be added, that Walter Scott performed his functions for several years gratuitously, while expecting the death of the titular clerk, his predecessor, who was an infirm old man. This fact has been disputed by M. Simond in his *Voyage en Angleterre*; he rectified the error in his second English edition only. If I do not give Fox's expression in the actual terms he used, I have a member of Sir W. Scott's family for my authority. The place of clerk or secretary to the Court of Session is worth, from 12 to 1500*l.* per annum. Sir W. Scott performs its duties with assiduity. It may be recollected that a member of the House of Commons one day denounced this place as a useless office, because it was exercised by a man, who found time to publish seven or eight volumes yearly, without counting his contributions to the Journals, &c. Reckoning up the emoluments derived from his place and books only, it may readily be conceived, that Sir Walter Scott has a chateau, an elegant town-house, numerous servants, a carriage with four horses, &c. &c.

Lady Scott entered the drawing-room, and laid

a box on the table, which she opened, and shewed to Mr Crabbe, and then to me: this box contained a kind of cockade or St. Andrew's cross, composed of pearls and precious stones found on the coasts of Scotland.

Lady Scott.—"It is a St. Andrew's Cross, which the ladies of Scotland have commissioned Sir W. Scott to present to his majesty before he alights. It is the work of a lady of high rank and great beauty."

I naturally admired the cross, the pearls, and the delicacy of the workmanship. Two children now entered; one the youngest son of Sir W. Scott, and the other, I believe, a brother of Mr. Lockhart; those are his majesty's two pages, said Lady Scott to me; and she explained to me that they would be pages only during the residence of the king at Edinburgh. I asked Sir Walter if he had not another son; and he replied, that he had a son twenty years of age, a lieutenant in the 15th Hussars. Mr. Scott is now in Prussia.*

Sir W. Scott.—"You find us in the midst of festivities, Doctor. You are come to Edinburgh at a time when our city is going to put forth all its bravery."

"I intend, however, to escape from all this bustle, and make my excursion into Perthshire during the king's stay."

Sir W. Scott.—"Indeed! What urgency induces you? You will be decidedly in the wrong. The

* He has lately married a rich heiress, the daughter of Mr. Jobson of Dundee, who has brought him a considerable dowry.

mountains and the lakes are always to be found; but the spectacle about to be exhibited in Edinburgh will not be renewed for some time."

Lady Scott.—"Baron Staël was also careless of staying; and set off for the north of Scotland. Pray, do not imitate him. We have, however, repeatedly told him that he was about to lose an unique spectacle."

Sir W. Scott.—"Since you love old Scotland, you will see its living physiognomy, or, at least, its national *costume*. We shall revive our old devices, our old titles, and some of the customs of independent Scotland. Why go to look for the Highland clans in the mountains, when the report of the king's arrival has resounded to the extremity of the ancient kingdom of Bruce, and brings hither daily new representatives of our historical names? You must remain. I will undertake to procure you a place where you will see every thing."

Lady Scott.—(Going to fetch a card.) "Here is a ticket for a place in a house which is at the corner of Princes-street; a house belonging to Mr. Constable."

"I will stay then, since you assure me that I should be in the wrong to go."

Sir Walter Scott.—"There will be general festivity and enthusiasm. It will constitute the poetry of national pomp."

"I did not imagine the Scotch such royalists."

Sir W. Scott.—"We have in Scotland a numerous opposition; we have, indeed, had two; but that of the jacobites is extinct since the battle of

Culloden, and sees in George IV. no more than the heir of the Stuarts. That of the whigs was only a matter of theory; they may honour the person of the prince, without compromising themselves; for the whig opposition confines itself to censuring the acts of government. But do not expect to find in Scotch toryism the excitation of southern regions."

"Do you refer to the south of France?"

Sir W. Scott.—"No, but to the oriental imaginations of Ireland. We shall not plunge into the sea in order to reach the King's yacht; we shall not attach ourselves to his carriage."*

"We did all that in France, and worse still, to the shame of the age of enlightenment be it spoken; but we had for our excuse, the miracles of 1814. It was a restoration; the voyage to Ireland was only an excursion."

Sir W. Scott.—"The journey to Scotland appears to me a fortunate event, because it will tend to rally parties together, who for many years have been accustomed to imbue their discussions with rancour. The hand of the whig will unite with that of the tory in the hand of the monarch. In England, politics are reserved for parliament or public dinners. They write with

* Sir W. Scott is so often quoted in England as an anti-liberal tory, that I am bound to say, that this dialogue is the authentic expression of his sentiments. I can demonstrate it by a pamphlet which he published on the subject of the King's visit to Scotland, and which will supply me, on occasion, materials for corroboration. I have even availed myself of it in order to fill up the *lacunæ* of my notes. I trust I shall stand excused for this excess of fidelity, since these additions will make the political opinion of Sir W. Scott more perfectly known.

violence, and make violent harangues; but the pamphlets and the harangues perform the office of safety valves: in private life, whig and tory meet amicably together. Here we are more rancorous; very amiable men, who have espoused opposite opinions, have insensibly reached the point of hating each other. There have been faults on both sides; once brought together by the royal presence, they will learn, I hope, that they ought never to have carried things so far."

Mr. Crabbe.—"The King will know how to appreciate the devotion of his Scotch subjects, although the expression be not so clamorous as that of his subjects in Ireland."

Sir W. Scott.—"Beyond a doubt; we have always passed for a proud people; the object now is to shew our pride, by making it consist in an adherence to our natural character. Our King will see us as nature and education have made us, calm and reasonable, even in our most exalted sentiments.* Besides, Ireland was no more than a lordship, when Scotland had already taken her place for a thousand years among the kingdoms of Europe. Ireland never saw a king set foot on her soil, except when grasping the sword as a conqueror and a tyrant. King George IV. comes here as the descendant of a long series of Scotch kings. The blood of the heroic Robert Bruce,

* I distinguish this passage with marks of quotation, because it is almost literally taken from the pamphlet quoted in the preceding note. The noble pride which it breathes well becomes, to my view, the individual who has caused the ancient Douglasses to express themselves with such strict fidelity, &c. in his novels and poems.

the blood of the noble, generous, and enlightened James I. runs in his veins; his Scotch ancestors shine with all the lustre which virtue and genius can confer. He is, moreover, our kinsman. As well as our Douglasses, our Stuarts, our Hamiltons, and our Bruces, all our high nobility are his admitted relatives; it is not too much to say, that there is scarcely a gentleman among the ancient families in Scotland, who cannot in one way or another, call himself the relative of the royal house, whence our sovereign has issued. Nay, in this inconsiderable kingdom, the blood of our families has been so often blended, that it cannot be doubted that the majority of our yeomen possess similar titles. In a word, we are the clan, and our King is the chief."

Sir Walter Scott here chimes in with a favourite idea of George IV., who wishes, by all means, to give pre-eminence to his claim of relationship with the Stuarts; and that more especially, since the decease of Cardinal de York. To this somewhat unconstitutional sentiment, perhaps, must be ascribed the pensions so readily granted to the relics of the exiled family. A story is even related, of a singular concession made by George III. to an obstinate partizan of the legitimacy of the Stuarts.

His Majesty (it is Mr. Hogg from whom the narrative is derived,) heard talk of a rich gentleman in Perthshire, who not only had refused to take the oath of allegiance, but moreover, would not permit any one to name George III. as King in his presence. "Give my compliments to him,"

said the King, "but no, stay; perhaps he will not receive my compliments as King of England: say the compliments of the Elector of Hanover, and add, that I respect the constancy and firmness of his principles." Referring to this anecdote, the *Edinburgh Review* hastens to remark, that it is the fabrication of some mystifier, who has abused the jacobite credulity of the Ettric Shepherd. It is certain, that it is almost an insult towards the children of those who allowed themselves to be slaughtered at Culloden, in order to defend the House of Brunswick against the *constancy* and *firmness* of such jacobites as him, to whom the compliments of George III. were conveyed.

Sir W. Scott.—"The sight of a King is a novelty to the Scotch people. The sceptre, the crown, and the sword of Bruce, preserved in deposit at the castle, will no longer appear the vain emblems of an extinguished monarchy. The entry of George IV. into Edinburgh, will be a sort of accession to the Scotch throne. The two first princes of the House of Hanover, could scarcely do otherwise than consider our country as a malcontent province. George III. gave early demonstration of emancipation from the natural prejudices of his family; but he never came to make his peace with us. It was reserved for his son to put the last seal to the *act of union.*"

Lady Scott.—"I yesterday saw Lady ———, who was quite taken up with preparations for her presentation."

Sir W. Scott.—"She must rehearse."

"It is no trifling affair then?"

Lady Scott.—" Ladies are not received into the King's circle, but in dresses with long trains, four yards long."

" That must really be a very embarrassing affair."

Sir W. Scott.—" The gentleman in waiting supports it till the lady approaches his Majesty. The lady then pays her respects by a low curtsey. The king raises her and salutes her on the cheek."*

" Is that indispensable ?"

Sir W. Scott.—" Indispensable. That done, the lady retires, without ceasing to turn her face towards the monarch, till she is out of the circle. The difficulty of retiring backwards without assistance, is very great for such as are not accustomed to it. The ladies must exercise themselves in managing their trains with skill and dignity, in order to be able to retire without turning their backs. It will be a sad affair for the young lady who should be so unfortunate to commit a *faux pas* on such an occasion. It was a more easy operation when the ladies wore hoops; but now there is nothing to support the robe."

* The word *salute* here, means *kiss*. Squire Thornhill, in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, does not forget to salute Olivia and Sophia in this manner on their first interview. It is curious that the traditional custom of this system of saluting has been reserved, for the benefit of squires, among a people where the men accost each other and part with a simple shake of the hand; which, indeed, is preferable to the French mode of embracing. I forget the name of the comedy, performed at the Rue Richelieu, or the Odeon, in which two Englishmen meet, and cordially embrace; the author or the actors have committed in this incident a falsification of English manners.—French Edition.

Sir W. Scott being one of the masters of the ceremonies for the occasion, has taken the trouble of publishing these instructions more in detail. The world will smile, like me, at seeing a fine genius, like his, occupied with these *minutiæ :* a great man risques nothing by being painted in his slippers and morning gown. But I should think myself indiscreet, if I had not all Edinburgh for a witness of that which I here relate, and of that which I shall have to relate, on the subject of the part played by the author of *Ivanhoe,* during the visit of George IV. The journals, the inflexible journals, have said more about it than me; and I consider myself happy in recording such of the expressions of Sir W. Scott as raise his dignity, and somewhat excuse the anecdote of the wine glass.*

Sir W. Scott has assembled at his table many chiefs of clans, dressed in their national costume. The circumstance has not been forgotten; no more than the independence and haughtiness of old Caledonia. Certainly it was another affair from that of George IV. and his buffoon, Sir W. Curtis, both metamorphosed into Highlanders, when after the bottle had freely circulated, these children of Scotch worthies, crossing their arms so as to grasp each other's hands, and with their elbows on the table, sung in enthusiastic chorus, Burns's ode,

"*Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled.*"

It has been a cause of wonder, that the poet on

* See farther on.

this occasion, did not produce some song worthy of his reputation. His new words to the old air of "Carle now the King's come," is not equal to his reputation. It is in the original in Burns's dialect. But Burns sung the Stuart cause with more dignity. Sir Walter's *patois* song, however, has some animation in it. It cannot be denied, that the personification of the valleys and towns of Scotland, as Haddington, Lothian, Tweedale, and the appeal to historical names, imbue it with some local colour and interest. But better things were expected.

I, in my turn, am about to profit by the opportunity, in order to insert some poor verses of my own, composed while sauntering along the banks of the Esk, on my return from Melrose.

Stances composées le 9 août 1822, et addressées a Sir Walter Scott.

Nobles enfans de la Calédonie,
Un étranger, ému de vos transports,
Ose y mêler la voix de sa patrie
Pour célébrer les attraits de vos bords.

Unie à nos drapeaux la bannière écossaise
Jadis plus d'une fois a guidé nos soldats;
De maint fils de vos preux fameux dans les combats
La devise est encore française.

Que j'aime à me placer sur le trône d'Arthur
Pour contempler votre moderne Athène,
Et ses vaisseaux que sur ses flots d'azur
Balance avec orgueil la mer calédonienne.

Oui, je comprends l'ami de Marmion
Avec transport quand il s'écrie,
En oubliant qu'il est fils d'Albion:
Ah! qui ne serait fier d'une telle patrie!

Et de combien de noms l'imposant souvenir
Vient encore ajouter à tout ce que j'admire!
Pour eux ces bords ont vu périr
Et Wallace and Robert tant vantés par la lyre.

De l'Homère caléd̈onien
Ces lieux ont plaint la sublime tristesse.
De l'ancien Barde dernier bien,
La harpe ici charmait sa fille et sa vieillesse..

Elle retrouve enfin ses magiques accens
Cette harpe à Morvean si chère;
Sa mélodie accompagne tes chants,
O poète inspiré, dont l'Ecosse est si fière!

Que de ton nom les enfans d'Edina
Ne cessent de faire leur gloire;
Le souvenir en survivra
A celui de mainte victoire.

Fils des vieux ménestrels, pardonne si ma main
Osa s'égarer sur ta lyre,
De tes concerts le son divin
Seul a pu m'inspirer cet indiscret délire.

Hier encore j'errais lentement
Sur la rive enchantée où ton château s'élève.
La Muse m'apparut, — et je crus un moment...
Hélas! ce n'était qu'un vain rêve.

Mais je me tais; il n'appartient qu'á toi
De chanter ta patrie et sa noble constance;
Avec un timide silence
J'écouterai le Barde ami du roi.

Et vous, Calédoniens, aux accords de sa lyre
Mêlez les chants de votre loyauté;
Terre heureuse oú le peuple en même temps peut dire;
VIVE LE ROI! VIVE LA LIBERTE!

LETTER XCI.

TO. M. LE GÉNERAL BEAUVAIS.

Edinburgh, 13th August.—The King's arrival is delayed. Edinburgh is becoming restless and uneasy; heavy vapours envelop its rocks and towers; meanwhile the crowds hurry to Calton Hill, and are looking out with all kinds of optical instruments, for the distant appearance of the royal escort. Towards the evening, a storm came on and dispersed the anxious groupes.

14th of August.—This morning the sky is still sombre, but the people's countenances clear up. His Majesty's yacht has been descried in the Frith of Forth; it is now at anchor. I proceed to Sir Walter Scott's.

Sir Walter was in the *costume* of deputy lieutenant; blue frock turned up with red, and sword by his side; this elegant *costume*, which usually makes the wearer look younger, imparted a military grace to his whole person; after breakfast, Sir Walter proceeded in his carriage to Leith, and there embarked in order to pay his respects to the King in his yacht. Here the poet disappeared, and the part of courtier began, a part which is always distinguished by something degrading or ridiculous

when performed by genius.* If George IV. does not create Sir Walter Scott a peer of England, he is unworthy of the homage he has received. Sir Walter first presented him the cross of St. Andrew, with which the King graciously invested his person. All was very well up to this point. He then offered his Majesty a glass to drink the welcome cup, and poured out the wine. His Majesty tasted it, and passed the glass to the heir of the Scotch muses. Sir Walter Scott did not consider himself worthy to drink his Majesty's health, but eagerly possessed himself of the glass, which he emptied into the sea, and put in his pocket the crystal which had touched lips so august, for the sake of keeping it as a relic. Alas! during the bard's return to Leith, it was broken into a thousand pieces, either by chance or by the malice of the *white lady*, or perhaps that of the goblin page, through vexation at seeing the poet esteem this frail record more than the real talisman of his glory.†

Sir Walter Scott is returned to announce to his

* See for example, the dedication of the tragedies of the great Corneille.

† I should have torn out this page from the life of *my hero*, if I had not imposed on myself a strict impartiality. Besides, others may judge differently of the circumstance; but I am not sorry to be able to oppose it against the judgment of Mr. Thomas Moore, and other editors of the *Edinburgh Review*, who consider as very ridiculous, and especially as very servile on the part of the author of the *Martyrs*, some pamphlets which express a royalist enthusiasm, (so ill rewarded.) I consider, it is true, the *Vive le Roi quand même*, a wretched pickthank affair, among a people who have sworn to the constitution of 1789,

countrymen, that their gracious sovereign deigned, in consequence of the bad weather, to delay his entrance into the Scotch capital till the following day. There was a general exclamation at such a proof of condescension;* another fear now agitated the minds of these loyal subjects. This very morning the King was apprized of the suicide of his premier, or rather his grand vizier, the Marquis of Londonderry. The question arose whether his Majesty would condescend to dissemble his grief, in order to sympathize with the universal rejoicing. Exclamations were still made about the fortitude of the monarch, when the report was diffused, that he did not wish to be, or appear to be, too much affected. What a lesson for the Mazarins, who imagine they reign in the hearts of kings!†

Thursday, August 15th. The king did not disembark till mid-day. The sun has at length divested itself of his cloudy veil, and has been saluted with acclamations by the whole city, like a host whose absence would have been fatal to the splendour of the festival. It must be owned that the sun never shone upon a more brilliant spectacle. I found at Mr. Constable's house, to which I had a

that of 1792, that of the directory, that of the consulship, the empire, &c. But the Bourbons presented themselves to us with that species of consecration which misfortune imparts, and which may therefore excuse, even in our age, some flatteries, the fashion of which, thanks to the diffusion of constitutional manners, will quickly pass away.

* I refer to the journals of the time.

† The preceding year, at the moment of setting his foot in Ireland, George IV. was apprized of another important death, that of his Royal Consort. He supported the news with the same magnanimity.

ticket of admission, Mr. Constable himself, who introduced me to Professor Leslie, and some contributors to the *Review*, whom I had not hitherto met. After an hour of expectation and conversation with these redoubted critics, I escaped, in order to return into the streets, and re-join my philosopher. He had stationed himself, with Mr. Hugo, on a seat of a scaffold, to which I did not wish to confine myself more than to Mr. Constable's. I was thus prevented from hearing all the vivacious commentaries of our caustic consul. I went and returned twice from one extremity of Leith Walk to the other, between lines of constables, provided with long painted wands, heralds at arms, Highlanders, archers, &c. &c., and through mobs of people, or spectators, who almost all wore St. Andrew's crosses in their caps. Before the façades of the houses, scaffolds in stages were erected, and already crowded, where the proprietor invited spectators to seat themselves at the rate of three shillings a place. But the most curious amphitheatres were Arthur's Mount, Calton Hill, and the castle, which were covered with so dense a crowd, that nothing could be distinguished from a distance but a sea of heads, which the slightest acclamation set in motion. Without incurring the risk of far-fetched analogy, these heights, which command the town, might be compared to living mountains, or to giants, with the hundred heads of classical mythology. At noon, the cannon resounded; a barge was seen detaching

itself from the yacht, darting through the numerous vessels which covered the bay, and conducting the monarch to land. He was received with acclamations, which were redoubled as soon as it was perceived that he had added to his cockade the thistle and heath of Scotland. After the usual set speeches from the magistrates of Leith and some dignitaries of Edinburgh, the retinue proceeded; at the head of it, with his heralds, was lion king at arms, wearing the costume described in *Marmion;* his crown, and scarlet mantle reaching to the ground, his embroidered boots, his golden spurs, &c. &c.; he was followed by a not less brilliant groupe, the lord marshal with his six squires. Following as they did these splendid representatives of Scotland, in the middle ages, the detachments of infantry in modern uniforms, and even that of the Scotch Greys,—*those terrible grey horses,* as it is alleged Buonaparte called them at the battle of Waterloo,—attracted less remark; but in the midst of the pomp, the variegated costume of the Highlanders appeared still more picturesque. The King came in an open carriage, surrounded by archers, and by the *tail* of the Glengarries, who had resolutely contended for the participation of this honour. The dukes, the earls, the barons, on horseback, and the carriages filled with nobles and magistrates, contributed to the *eclat* of the procession. Among the vehicles there was one which excited a momentary mirth when it passed before the place where I was seated; it was that of the Baillie of Glasgow; it was Baillie Nicol Jarvie, some one said, and this popular name was

repeated with ironical acclamations. A feeling of mockery is connected with the recollection of Rob Roy's cousin, which the very name of manufacturing Glasgow often excites in lordly Edinburgh.

The military music, the Scottish airs, performed on the bagpipe, and the popular acclamations, soon drowned the noise of this isolated scene. After seeing the keys of the town offered to the King, under the triumphal arch of Picardy-place, I had time to go and choose a new post of observation on Calton Hill, and to admire the effect of the magnificent procession, defiling from the grand terrace of Princes-street, to Holyrood-house, where the King alighted. At this moment, the cannon, planted on the tops of the different hills, fired volleys, which were reverberated by a hundred echoes; those hills might have been compared to volcanoes, declaring war against each other. Meanwhile, the Frith of Forth, gilded by a beautiful sun, exhibited a fine contrast to the tumultuous city; its water sparkling with the motion of a multitude of barks, which had surrounded the royal flotilla in the morning.

On reverting to the palace, within whose precinct the prince had just been received, the eye was struck with the trite effect of those old gothic walls, flanked with four battlemented, but inelegant turrets, and which the ruins of the chapel render still more sombre. I should have been pleased with following the triumph of George IV. into these apartments, the solitude of which had struck me as so solemn. In the long series of

portraits of the kings of Scotland, which a fortnight back were the only tenants of those tragic halls, have any been concealed with a veil, which were calculated to awaken troublesome and fatal ideas in a festival; such as the pictures which represent Charles I.'s family,* or the unfortunate Mary Stuart? Has the blood been at length erased from the floor which flowed from the heart of that queen's favourite, David Rizzio? The King is only to make a short halt at Holyrood; he is to sleep at Dalkeith Castle.

I stood for some time contemplating from the top of Calton Hill, the crowds who were retracing their way, and then descended into Princes-street, mingling with the less numerous throng, and hearing their spontaneous expressions of joy. Every Scotchman appeared proud of so fine a spectacle, in which he had participated. I again stopped on the pavement at a few paces from Hume's tomb, when a miserable object approached me, who absorbed the whole of my attention. He was an old bagpipe player, blind, and in highland costume; but the tartan of his philibeg and vest was torn in several places; one of his withered hands occasionally pressed the bladder of his bagpipe, while the fingers of the other successively moved over the holes of the pipe, while the streamers which once adorned the instrument were faded and in tatters. He vainly attempted to change the broken tune of a dirge, for the

* Charles I. and his queen, with the famous dwarf of *Peveril of the Peak*, Sir Geoffrey Hudson, holding a spaniel in a leash.

slower motions and complicated variations of the pibroch, or the brisk and jigging air of a reel. No passenger stopped to lend an ear to the national airs performed by a begging minstrel; the least hurried avoided him in order to save their holiday clothes from contact with his worn out garments; others in their more hasty progress, elbowed without seeing him; the poor blind man had a dog with dirty and wiry hair, holding his master's pouch in his teeth, but apparently ashamed, as if he understood the disdain of which he was the object; he walked with his head down, and seemed to wish to drag his master away from the spot, by the string which attached him to the blind man's arm. This scene affected me, and I reflected that the blind musician, like the last minstrel of Sir Walter Scott, had, perhaps, "known better days." Then reproaching myself for this barren sentiment of pity, I slipped into the empty pouch the traveller's *mite*,—a shilling, adorned with the effigy of the royal visitor George IV.

August 16. Yesterday, the celebration of the King's entry was limited to a display of fireworks, which I shall not describe, because I have seen better at Tivoli. The bonfire lighted on Arthur's Seat, produced a very different impression on my imagination. I have already compared the hills of Edinburgh to volcanoes. Arthur's Seat reminded me still more at midnight of an eruption of Vesuvius. This evening was fixed for the general illumination; it is near midnight, and I have just returned to my lodging with my eyes

dazzled. In a town situated as Edinburgh is, an illumination, it may be easily conceived, is an unique spectacle; every body participated in it, the little and the great. In Scotland and in England, the lamps and tapers are placed within the casements; the light consequently is transmitted more purely through the windows, and it is not obscured by its own smoke Transparencies, and coloured lamps were not forgotten, and I amused myself in collecting some devices and allegorical emblems, which expressed naturally, or burlesquely, in a noble or trivial manner, the enthusiasm of the moment. Having met Sir Walter Scott and his family, I followed them for an hour through the crowd, and remarked, that wherever he was recognised, the crowd readily made way, in order to give him room to pass. I quitted him in order to go and station myself on Calton Hill, and there enjoy whatever grandeur there exists in a great conflagration, without experiencing any of the terrors it occasions. The Old Town, like the New Town, the public edifices, the columns, the domes and steeples on all sides, glowed with the most brilliant light. Edinburgh, in short, appeared enveloped in a mantle of fire. In the less enlightened angles, the intersection of the luminous rays accurately represented the floating folds of the new species of imperial purple, with which this most picturesque of cities was invested.

I depart the day after to-morrow, to go and rejoin my friend, M. Charles F——e, who set out this

morning, to wait for me at Stirling. A friend has promised to send me a narrrative of such new fêtes as may be given to the King. This narrative will doubtless reach us in some solitary nook in Scotland, where civilization has not yet introduced its fireworks and its transparencies.

LETTER XCII.

TO MR. M. P. BOURDELON.

It was originally my wish to date my letters on Burns from Ayreshire; but after quoting his name several times in the first part of my tour, I think myself bound to state my opinions of his poetry beforehand; besides, it will perhaps be the means of interesting my readers more vividly in the history of his life, and that of his compositions. These I shall connect with the localities of Ayrshire, where he followed the plough, and those of Dumfries, where he was reduced to occupy a post in the excise. Thanks to the materials supplied by Doctor Currie, and to my own notes, I propose to introduce into the framework of an essay on Burns, some curious details respecting the education and manners of the Scotch people, which will serve by way of introduction to my letters on the course of study pursued at the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The genius of Burns is not solely remarkable, because he can be counted as a phenomenon of the class from whence he sprung; but this labourer "*rat de cave*" is moreover a great poet, compared with the most distinguished names of English poetry. The man of the people, whose education was incomplete, betrays himself sometimes in such of his verses as want that elegant polish, that perspicuity, that refined raillery, and that delicacy which the familiarity with the world teaches much better than books; but when his subject supplied him with the inspiration natural to his genius or his humour, to his enthusiasm, or his ironical vivacity, the style of Burns, pure as it is correct, expresses alternately and with equal felicity, tenderness, and humourous joviality, as well as the most natural indignation, the most exalted sentiments, as well as epigrammatic sarcasm. Scotland is more proud of Burns than of any of her poets, and she is right to be so; the poetry of Burns is exclusively hers. It appertains to her soil, her climate, and her manners. No model has left its impression there; all is frank and original. Let me haste to quote an instance.

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.

The sun had closed the winter day
The curlers quat their roaring play
An' hunger'd maukin taen her way
To kail-yards green,

While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

The thresher's weary *flinging-tree*
The lee-lang day had tired me;
And whan the day had clos'd his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the *spence*, right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,
That fill'd, wi' host-provoking smeek,
The auld clay biggin;
An' heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin.

All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mused on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done naething,
But stringin blethers up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank an' clarkit
My cash account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, mutt'ring, blockhead! coof!
And heav'd on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I, henceforth, would be *rhyme-proof*
Till my last breath—

When click! the string the snick did draw:
And jee the door gaed to the wa;
An' by my ingle-lowe I saw,
Now bleezin bright,
A tight outlandish *Hizzie*, braw,
Come full in sight.

Ye need nae doubt, I held my whisht;
The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht;
I glowr'd as eerie's I'd been dusht
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest worth she blusht,
And stepped ben.

Green, slender leaf-clad *holly-boughs*
Were twisted, gracefu' round her brows,
I took her for some *Scottish Muse*,
By that same token;
An' come to stop those reckless vows,
Wou'd soon been broken.

A 'hair-brain'd, sentimental trace'
Was strongly marked in her face;
A wildly-witty rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
Beem'd keen with honor.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
'Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my bonnie *Jean*
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight and clean,
Nane else came near it.

Her *mantle* large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep *lights* and *shades*, bold-mingling, threw
A lustre grand;
And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
A *well known* land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
There, mountains to the skies were tost:
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
With surging foam;
There, distant shone art's lofty boast,
The lordly dome.

Here, *Doon* pour'd down his far-fetched floods;
There, well-fed *Irwine* stately thuds:
Auld hermit *Ayr* staw thro' his woods,
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient *borough* rear'd her head;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race,
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
And polish'd grace.

By stately tow'r or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race heroic wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dy'd steel
In sturdy blows;
While back recoiling seem'd to reel
There southron foes.

His COUNTRY'S SAVIOUR, mark him well!
Bold *Richardson's*, heroic swell;
The chief on *Sark* who glorious fell,
In high command;
And *he* whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

There, where a sceptr'd *Pictish* shade
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, pourtray'd
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
They strode along.

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove,
Near many a hermit- fancy'd cove,
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love,
In musing mood)
An *aged Judge*, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

With deep-struck reverential awe
The learned *sire* and *son* I saw,
To Nature's God and Nature's law
They gave their lore,
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adore.

Brydone's brave ward I well could spy,
Beneath old *Scotia's* smiling eye;
Who call'd on fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot-name on high
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heav'nly-seeming *fair*;
A whisp'ring throb did witness bear
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder sister's air
She did me greet.

'All hail! my own inspired bard!
'In me thy native muse regard!
'Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
'Thus poorly low!
'I come to give thee such reward
'As we bestow.'

'Know the great *genius* of this land
'Has many a light aerial band,

'Who, all beneath his high command,
'Harmoniously,
'As arts or arms they understand,
'Their labours ply.

'They *Scotia's* race among them share;
'Some fire the soldier on to dare;
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
'Corruption's heart;
'Some teach the bard, a darling care,
'The tuneful art.

''Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
'They ardent, kindling spirits pour;
'Or, mid the venal senate's roar,
'They, sightless, stan
'To mend the honest patriot-lore,
'And grace the hand.

'And when the bard, or hoary sage,
'Charm or instruct the future age,
'They bind the wild, poetic rage
'In energy,
'Or point the inconclusive page
'Full on the eye.

'Hence *Fullarton*, the brave and young;
'Hence *Dempster's* zeal-inspired tongue;
'Hence, sweet harmonious *Beattie* sung
'His "Minstrel lays;"
'Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
'The *sceptic's* bays.

'To lower orders are assign'd
'The humbler ranks of Human-kind,
'The rustic Bard, the lab'ring Hind,
'The Artisan;
'All chuse, as various they're inclin'd,
'The various man.

'When yellow waves the heavy grain,
'The threat'ning storm, some, strongly, rein;

'Some teach to meliorate the plain,
'With tillage-skill;
'And some instruct the shepherd-train,
'Blythe o'er the hill.

'Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
'Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
'Some soothe the lab'rer's weary toil,
'For humble gains,
'And make his cottage scenes beguile
'His cares and pains.

'Some, bounded to a district-pace,
'Explore at large man's infant race,
'To mark the embryotic trace
'Of *rustic Bard*;
'And careful note each op'ning grace,
'A guide and guard.

'*Of these am I—Coila* my name;
'And this district as mine I claim,
'Where once the *Campbells*, chiefs of fame,
'Held ruling pow'r:
'I mark'd thy embroy tuneful flame,
'Thy natal hour.

'With future hope, I oft would gaze,
'Fond, on thy little early ways
'Thy rudely caroll'd, chiming phrase,
'In uncouth rhymes,
'Fir'd at the simple, artless lays
'Of other times.

'I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
'Delighted with the dashing roar;
'Or when the north his fleecy store
'Drove thro' the sky,
'I saw grim nature's visage hoar
'Struck thy young eye.

'Or when the deep green-mantl'd earth
'Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth

'And joy, and music pouring forth
'In ev'ry grove,
'I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
'With boundless love.

'When ripen'd fields and azure skies,
'Call'd forth the reaper's rustling noise,
'I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys
'And lonely stalk,
'To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
'And pensive walk.

'When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
'Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
'Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
'Th' adored *Name*,
'I taught thee how to pour in song,
'To soothe thy flame.

'I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
'Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
'Misled by fancy's meteor-ray,
'By passion driven;
'But yet the *light* that led astray
'Was *light* from heaven.

'I taught thy manners-painting strains,
'The loves, the ways of simple swains,
'Till now, o'er all my wide domains
'Thy fame extends;
'An' some, the pride of *Coila's* plains,
'Become thy friends.

'Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
'To paint with *Thomson's* landscape-glow;
'Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
'With *Shenstone's* art;
'Or pour with *Gray*, the moving flow
'Warm on the heart.

'Yet all beneath th' unrivall'd rose,
'The lowly daisy sweetly blows;

'Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
'His army shade,
'Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
'Adown the glade.

'Then never murmur nor repine;
'Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;
'And trust me, not *Potosi's* mine,
'Nor king's regard,
'Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
'A *rustic Bard.*

'To give my counsels all in one,
'Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;
'Preserve *the Dignity of Man,*
'With soul erect;
'And trust, the *Universal Plan*
'Will all protect.

'*And wear thou this*'—she solemn said,
And bound the *Holly* round my head:
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

This apparition issues from the class of local superstitions. It is a bold personification of that great word (alas! that it should be no more than a word) which gained the victories of Bruce and Wallace, that of William Tell, and still nearer to our own age, those of Washington, &c.

Generally speaking, the songs of Burns, in the natural or lofty department of poetry, are more dramatic than descriptive. Burns associates but few traits of the landscape which surrounds him with the sentiments he expresses. Possessing little acquaintanceship with letters, still less does he admit images

which are alien to his natal land. There is a kind of unity of place in his descriptions which is much less rigidly observed by Sir Walter Scott himself, sparing as he is of classical illusions. Among the Scotch mountains Burns has been contented, as embellishments of his landscapes, with the gracefulness of a few vallies, the contrast offered by some old ruins, and the peculiar charm of that polar twilight which compensates the inhabitants of the north for their long winters. The reason chiefly is, that all the poetry of Burns originated from his exquisite susceptibility, which detected its elements in the most insignificant materials, as the bee extracts honey from the simplest flower. To what poet of *effete* civilization would the humble Easter daisy have inspired such a song as the ensuing?

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! its no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie *Lark*, companion meet!
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!
Wi' speckl'd breast,
When upward springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble, birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie *stibble-field*,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the *share* uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet *flow'ret* of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,
'Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of *prudent lore*,
'Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to *suffering worth* is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n,
To mis'ry's brink,
'Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but *Heav'n*,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's *plough-share drives, elate,*
Full on thy bloom,
'Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

The Lake School has had the merit of perceiving all the original freshness of this kind of poetry; but that which is *system* with Wordsworth, Wilson, Southey, &c. is *instinct* with Burns. This is the reason why the critics have had the laugh so much on their side on the subject of the Lake School, while accusing it of infantine affectation. A little field mouse, whose dwelling the plough destroys, inspires Burns, like the Easter daisy: but he affects us more powerfully in the melodious verses which depict his personal affections, and sometimes his afflictions.*

HIGHLAND MARY (MARIE DES MONTAGNES).

"O! rives couvertes de bruyères; flots qui entourez le château de Montgomery, que vos bocages verdissent à jamais, que vos fleurs soient toujours fraîches, et vot ondes toujours limpides; que sur vous d'abord l'été déploie son riche manteau, et qu'il retarde son depart; car c'est ici que je dis le dernier adieu à ma tendre Marie des montagnes.

"Comme elle était douce et belle la verdure du bouleau! combien était brillante la fleur de l'aubépine, lorsque, sous leur ombre embaumée, je pressai Marie sur mon sein. Les heures dorées sur leurs ailes d'ange passaient rapidement sur moi et mon amie; car elle était pour moi aussi

* The above is given as a favourable specimen of the author's power as a translator.

douce que la vie et la lumière, ma tendre Marie des montagnes.

"Des sermens, des embrassemens prolongés rendirent nos adieux plus touchans, et après nous être promis bien des fois de nous revoir, nous nous arrachâmes des bras l'un de l'autre ; mais hélas ! le froid précoce de la mort vint sitôt frapper et flétrir ma fleur chérie ; — vert est le gazon, et glacée la terre qui couvrent ma tendre Marie de montagnes.

"Ah ! elles sont pâles, pâles maintenant, ces lèvres de rose que tant de fois je baisai si tendrement : il est à jamais éteint le regard pétillant qui s'arrêtait sur moi avec tant d'amour ! il se flétrit dans une insensible poussière ce cœur qui m'aimait ! — Mais dans le mien vivra toujours ma tendre Marie des montagnes."

Highland Mary had been the first love of Burns. She returned to marry him, when death snatched her from his hopes. At their parting, they had religiously observed the artless and affecting simplicity of Scotch betrothal. Stationed on the shores of a river, the lovers washed their hands in the limpid waves, and then, each taking one end of the Bible, they swore mutual fidelity. When Burns married another female, to whom he was much attached, he never forgot Mary Campbell. The anniversary of her death was always a day of solitude and sorrow to him ; and on one of these days of mourning he composed a beautiful elegy upon her.

Burns did not only succeed in breathing poetical

sighs, and in uttering the accents of melancholy contemplation. He possessed a vein of original gaiety, which, whether he stood in need of some opiate for his misfortunes, or whether he was stimulated by the impulse of the moment, was inexhaustible. He has celebrated the popular superstitions of Scotland, and they have supplied him with sublime imagery; but in consequence of a peculiar bent of his mind, he constantly looked at the humorous side of the most diabolical traditions. Accordingly his *Halloween*, his *Tam O'Shanter*, &c. exhibit a singular combination of the terrible and the burlesque. Many of his songs and epistles are frolicsome effusions, or racy palinodes. The *Epistle to the Devil*, the *Lines to a Haggis*, the national *Eulogium on Whiskey*, &c. are felicitous compositions in this style. The *Twa Dogs* and the *Two Bridges of Ayr* are satirical dialogues which Voltaire and Lucian would not have disavowed. Some personalities had stirred the bile of the rigid ministers of the Presbyterian sect against Burns. The cant and tyranny of that clergy disgusted him. Subjected when young to the punishment of the cutty stool,* he retained a grudge against the kirk and went so far one day as to parody the sermon, in which he had been

* The cutty stool is the word which poor Jeannie Deans found herself so embarrassed in explaining to Queen Caroline, and which obliged the Duke of Argyle to make her a signal by touching her ruff. Unfortunate girls, and young men convicted of a lapse from virtue, are condemned to make atonement by being seated on the cutty stool, in the midst of the church. This custom begins to fall into disuse.

apostrophized in full congregation.* But Burns, in the midst of his errors, had preserved a great fund of religious feeling: frequent allusions to the Bible animate his prose as well as his poetry. His bucolic, called the *Cotter's Saturday Night*, is a perfectly religious picture, the principal features of which were furnished him by his reminiscences of his paternal roof, and of the patriarchal virtues of his family.

Scenes such as are there described constitute the essence of that grandeur of old Scotland, which render her esteemed at home and reverenced abroad. Princes and great men are no more than what the breath of monarchs make them; but

"An honest man's the noblest work of God,"

and certainly, considered with reference to the celestial road of virtue, the cottage leaves the palace far in the background. What is the real value of worldly pomp? It is a heavy burden.

Burns has written in English oftener than in Scotch. Sometimes, indeed, he passes in the same poem from one of these two idioms to the other: this is what his countrymen call the Doric style of the north. Let no one imagine that Burns's language is a *patois;* the polished inhabitants of capitals such as Paris and London are too ready to proscribe as rude the provincial dialects: they are to be pitied for not being enabled to feel their real charm. Pope and Gay employed themselves in translating the verses of

Allan Ramsay. We Frenchmen of the provinces, when transplanted to Paris, can discover in our disdained *patois* a multitude of natural or energetic words and old idioms, the absence of which has remarkably impoverished the language of Froissard, Montaigne, and Marot. For myself, I discover in my Arlesian dialect the language of a once independent state, which had its detached laws, character, and manners. My fancy associates it with the history of those old times, the relievoed but somewhat barbarous forms of which the prism of poetry softens down. This dialect was the language of more than one ancient hero who is still popular, and of those Troubadours, who subsisted in some degree on love, poetry, and glory; it was also the language of my childhood, of my first sports round the domestic hearth, and my first schoolboy friendships. How often in the midst of the bustle of Paris, while traversing the dense ranks of the crowd, have I turned round in strong emotion on hearing a familiar phrase or exclamation of my natal country. That phrase, like the song of the Thrush to poor Susan,* evoked a sudden train of tender images and affecting associations.†

We formerly possessed poets, whose forgotten names one sometimes meets with in turning over the pages of biography, such as Morand, the author

* See the letters in Wordsworth, vol. 2.

† Sent when very young to the college of Juilly, I remember how distrest I felt in finding on my return to my natal town, that I had forgotten its language. I considered myself a foreigner, till I had lost a little of my Parisian accent, and re-learned my patois.

of *Teglis*, who threw his hat at the pit, and indemnified it by that *boutade* of his provençal originality for a bad scene in his comedy; or Robin, who wrote a petition in verse to Lewis XIV., and demonstrated how much the art of elegantly turning an eulogium had improved, even in Provence, under the classical dictatorship of Boileau.

> "Que faire de mon Isle? Il n'y croit que de saules,
> Et tu n'aime, que les Lauriers."

But Morand and Robin wrote in French; they are completely forgotten by our people, while they know by heart a great number of the verses of Coye, whose name, perhaps, is not to be found in any dictionary. This Coye has written in the Troubadour dialect with great energy, and with the unaffected exuberance of gay buffoonery. He also might have been an Arlesian Burns; but with a few domestic allusions, which make us laugh or affect us in his works, he has combined too many images alien from local ideas; with a smattering of literature, he has studied less the traditions of the classic periods than the academic poetry of modern Paris. While writing the language of the people, it might be surmised, that he disdained their suffrage for that of our highly ridiculous Arlesian Academy of thirty gentlemen.* Though the heir of the Troubadours, the unlucky poet has not sighed a single couplet of tenderness, and has left nothing but a too cele-

* That academy no longer exists. It is true that we, probably, no longer possess three *Gentilshommes*.

brated ode, deploring the agonies of physical love. He neglects popular superstitions, in order to invoke Apollo, Pegasus, the whole Pagan Olympus, and talk to us about the pious Eneas. In his poem of the *Delire, or La Descente aux Enfers*, he describes the Styx, Charon, the Eumenides, Pluto, Proserpine, &c.; and it is to Virgil's Elysium, that he goes in search of the Archbishop of Arles, the virtuous Jansen. But as if the national muse had resolved on punishing him for thus belying her inspiration, and the true titles of our glory, she has rendered his vision of the past imperfect; and he has been incapable of perceiving and distinguishing among those to whom death is a source of joy, our Wallaces and Bruces; neither the celebrated Porcelet, whose virtue saved him from the general massacre of the Sicilian vespers; nor the Chevalier Bozon, who killed the Dragon of Rhodes; nor Quequeran de Beaugen, who singly dared to conceive and execute the project of delivering his uncle from Mussulman captivity; nor finally, if we re-ascend to the period of our republic, the Pons Gaillards, and the Bertrand Ventairons, whose energy and courage prompted them to protest against our already degenerate nobility, and against the cowardice of the prelate, by whom our independence was sold to Charles of Anjou.

I must have imperfectly expressed myself, if it be believed that I wish entirely to proscribe mythological names and comparisons. Some of them are sacred; such as express a moral idea, or a physical phenomenon, may be happy synonymes for poetry;

as Phœbus for the sun; Vulcan for fire, &c. Besides, it were a vain attempt to escape entirely from the influence of college education. As to Coye, although he was little better educated than Burns, he was the more excusable for invoking the deities of paganism, since he wrote in a town, replete with vestiges of the worship and power of pagan Rome. The Venus of Arles was admired at the Parisian Museum, when the Venus de Medici still shone there; at every step he took, Coye might contemplate some noble ruin, such as a statue of Jupiter, the porticos of an ancient temple, tombs dedicated to the Dii Manes, the obelisk of Marius, &c., and our magnificent amphitheatre,*—one of those gigantic creations destined to transmit to posterity the divinity of the Roman people, and worthy of the architects of that empress of the world, who swore by her own eternity. What I reproach him with having forgotten is, that the cross planted by Trophime, crowns the summits of all those monuments which are still erect, or which lie half buried in their own ruins.

I hope to be pardoned these digressions in favour of my natal soil, respecting which I have otherwise endeavoured to preserve as sober a tone as possible through the course of this work I

* I learn that through the intervention of our new mayor, Baron Laugier de Chartrouse, workmen are beginning to clear these magnificent arenas; but a labour of this kind can proceed but slowly under the Vandalism of the present ministry. Much, however, may be expected from the enlightened zeal of so worthy a man as M. Laugier.

return to the subject of Scotland, by quoting the lines, wherein Burns, excited by the same feeling which for a while abstracted me, elevates it above all the countries of the world.

"Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright-beaming summers exalt the perfume,
Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green breckan,
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom:
Far dearer to me are yon humble broom bowers,
Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly unseen:
For there, lightly tripping amang the wild flowers,
A listening the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

"Tho' rich is the breeze in their gay sunny vallies,
And cauld, Caledonia's blast on the wave;
Their sweet scented woodlands that skirt the proud palace,
What are they? The haunt o' the tyrant and slave!
The slave's spicy forests, and gold bubbling fountains,
The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain;
He wanders as free as the winds of his mountains,
Save Love's willing fetters, the chains o' his Jean."

These harmonious stanzas lead me to an examination of the Caledonian melodies; but it has not been my intention to give more in this volume than a portion of the history of the poet of Coila: as a contrast to Ossian's voice of Cona, Burns invests himself with the name of the *Voice of Coila*; that is to say, of *Kyle*, a district of Ayrshire, called so, according to tradition, from Coil, the king of the Picts.

LETTER XCIII.

TO M. PAUL DE LAROCHE.

A LITTLE affair to settle with Mr. Archibald Constable detained me in Edinburgh a day longer than I intended; and I was obliged to send and get back my luggage from the coach-office, by a cadie.* Mr. Constable received me to a family breakfast; he had his young ladies at table, who appeared to me very charming, and must be wealthy matches. His drawing room is fitted up like that of a nobleman, with valuable paintings, the most remarkable of which is the great picture of Sir Walter Scott by Raeburn. Mr. Archibald and myself parted the best friends in the world, and I received from him in a parcel a volume of his own composing, which consists of a collection of all the poetry and epigraphs in the *Scotch novels*. We naturally talked much about Sir Walter, and the "*Great Unknown*." I was greatly pleased with hearing Mr. Constable repeat that Sir Walter was "the best of men." Mr. Constable, as a publisher, may be well paid for saying so: but I have talked of Sir Walter

* The messengers stationed at the corners of the streets are called cadies. In the time of Smollet this body recruited its numbers among the highlanders. They were remarkable for the agility with which they ascended the lofty staircases of the houses. Their fidelity in delivering a parcel, or a *billet doux*, is still vaunted.

Scott at Melrose, and in the environs; and there, beneath the thatched roof of the poor, as well as at Edinburgh, beneath the gilded ceilings of his library, Sir W. Scott is called the best of men. The wealthy do not obtain among the people a title such as this (and it is not inglorious) without conferring benefit. Mr. Constable, although brought up in the school of the *Edinburgh Review*, is not precisely a verbose critic. When I eulogised the literary merit of Sir Walter, he replied by a laconic phrase of approbation, or by that speaking look which sometimes animates the most austere, as well as the calmest physiognomy. He, however, expressed all his admiration and my own, in a decision, which posterity will probably ratify, although it proceeds from the lips of an interested person. "We may boast to our grand-children," said he, "of having been the contemporaries of four great men: Napoleon for war, James Watt for the mechanic arts, Sir Walter Scott for literature."—Mr. Constable paused a moment, as if trying to recollect a fourth; but he did not name him; and I suppose he was betrayed by his memory. I shall, therefore, leave his name blank: besides the age is not finished; the competition remains open.

I requested Mr. Constable to shew me some MS. of Sir Walter Scott, reminding him that he had promised, among the rest, to let me see that of *Marmion*. Unfortunately he had lent it the evening before. He shewed me an ancient receipt book of George Heriot, whose memoirs

he has just published. He was, moreover, going to shew me some manuscript sheets of the author of Waverley; but he, no doubt, feared committing an imprudence, and found an ingenious Scotch evasion to elude the request.

Mr. Constable made the following calculation in round numbers of the sale of the Scotch Novels, from the earliest down to *Peveril of the Peak*; they compose forty-six volumes in English, which cost upon an average 500 francs;* 20,000 copies of each novel have issued from the house of the publisher, amounting to 10,000,000 francs. Out of this sum Mr. Constable has paid the author 1,500,000 francs for copyright since 1814.†

The first edition of each novel amounts to 10,000 copies. Then come the reprints, and the additions to the complete sets in various shapes.

Sir Walter Scott has recently received a thousand guineas for the little poem of Halidon Hill alone. His poems, which have sold as well as his novels, have produced him near a million of franks. His biographies, his periodical contributions, his prefaces, his commentaries, have not been lost pages in point of profit. In fine, it may be calculated, that there are in the trade more than twenty millions (franks) worth of printed paper bearing the name of Walter Scott, without calculating the translations into French, German,

* More than 30,000 were sold of the earliest, *Waverley*.

† Since writing this letter, Mr. Constable has published four new novels, and the author has received 40,000 francs more.

Italian, Spanish, Polish, &c. If the paper manufacturers do not some day erect a statue to the Scotch novelist, they are very ungrateful.

Stirling.—The road from Edinburgh to Stirling is a charming well kept road; the mail is very commodious; the mail is a privileged *diligence.* The coachman and the guard wear red liveries.

In quitting Edinburgh, I passed through the charming village of Corstorphine. At a pretty bridge over the Almond River, Edinburghshire ends, and the eye embraces the fertile plains of East Lothian. The harvest has scarcely commenced. We have already passed the middle of August, and the ears are rather forward this year. We stopped at Linlithgow; this village is ill built, and only consists of a single street; the ruins of its old palace are situated on a little woody upland, the foot of which is bathed by a reservoir of clear water. Almost close to the castle is the Gothic church where James the Fourth had that miraculous apparition, related by Lindsay in the fourth canto of *Marmion.* The castle was formerly a royal residence. Poor Mary Stuart was born there; that name alone is like a talisman which imparts a value to these ruins and their mouldering dust. But the horn is blown; the coachman is on his box, and the horses prick up their ears on merely seeing the shadow of the whip depicted on the road beside them; for they rarely require its contact. We are again on the road, and in Stir-

lingshire. The forges of the Carron Works roar on our right, and vomit their thick smoke. We now pass the plain of Falkirk, which recalls the memory of Wallace and Prince Edward. The landscape becomes invested with wood, and more and more animated and embellished as we advance. A bridge aqueduct, thrown across the road, appeared from a distance as if it would bar our passage. This bridge appertains to the canal which unites the Forth and the Clyde. A vessel was passing it with all her sails up, and seemed to be floating through the air. But as we approached, the bridge's span enlarged, and our vehicle lightly rolled on, beneath an arch whence a few drops of water, which had filtered through its stones, fell as we past. A vaster plain now opened on our view, and naturally excited the idea of its having been the site of some great battle. Four Scotchmen, situated like myself on the top of the vehicle, immediately recognized it; and all four by common consent pronounced the name of Bannockburn. It was in fact that eminently famous plain—the Morat of Caledonia—which no Scotchman passes without a vision of the glorious shades of Bruce and his soldiers effacing the memory of the defeat of Falkirk, and reconquering the independence of the country. The theatre of the battle has been so well described by the chroniclers, Barbour, and since Barbour by Lord Hailes and Sir Walter Scott, that a single glance of the eye will suffice

to find the positions of the two armies on the plain. The eminence still exists where Maurice, the Prior of Inchastray, celebrated mass, in sight of Bruce's soldiers. The fancy requires little excitement to depict him coming, after the pious ceremony, to the front of the battle, barefooted, with a crucifix in his hand, and exhorting, in a few laconic energetic words, the sons of Scotland to fight for their rights and liberty. The Scotch knelt. "They surrender," exclaimed Edward; "see they implore pardon."—"Yes!" returned Ingebrand of Umfraville; "but not of us; they will conquer or die."

Not far from Bannockburn is Torwood, which had been the asylum of the fugitive Wallace. An old root of Wallace's tree is still pointed out near the turnpike on the road.

Before arriving at Stirling it is necessary to pass St. Ninian, an elegant town, the environs of which are daily enriched by cultivation. A mile farther, and we beheld Stirling—"the barrier of the North," as Sir Walter Scott calls it. Placed on a black, basaltic rock, which projects with a bold, almost perpendicular, escarpment towards the west, and which descends by a gentle and gradual slope towards the east, the town and castle of Stirling at first surprise the traveller by their resemblance to the old town and castle of Edinburgh.

"It is Dunedin in miniature," say the Scotch; the city is sombre and irregular; but the eye is never tired of the numerous points of view,

discovered from the height. Charles F—e waited for me two days there; he shall be my cicerone; but I might almost manage with the *Lady of the Lake*. It is here that this poem commences and ends.

The castle is extensive. It contains a chapel converted into an hospital, and a palace built by James V. the irregular architecture of which is adorned with grotesque statues. Stirling Castle was a royal residence as early as James I.; James II. was born there; and the hall is still shewn where the latter prince poignarded Douglas with his own hand. James V. left more auspicious reminiscences to Stirling. That prince, the Fitz-James of the *Lady of the Lake*, cheerful and brave, haughty and gallant, affable and courteous, discovered many features of analogy to our Henry IV. Popular, like the Bearnese king, he was proud of the title of King of the Commons, which his courtiers gave him through derision. He departed as gaily to perform a chivalrous exploit, as to terminate an amorous adventure. When he disguised himself in order to supervise the administration of justice, or pay incognito court to some Gabrielle, James called himself the Farmer of Ballangiceh.

A thousand interesting localities are discovered from the heights of Stirling. Immediately beneath the citadel, is the Theatre of the Tournaments. A portion of the basalt escarpement, on which Stirling is built, has preserved the name of the *Ladies Rock*. These doubtless were the privileged

places. A girdle of green trees, rising one behind the other, form on that side a kind of amphitheatre, the semi-circular steps of which are little paths shaded by foliage. We stopped there for hours together to breath the pure atmosphere; but on the esplanade of the castle where nothing confines the view, an imperious feeling of admiration transports the spectator out of the inaction of reverie. The eye greedily surveys the rich details of a picture, which every where produces the grandest effect. The waters of the Forth are seen to double back repeatedly towards their source, like a serpent sporting on a meadow. The whole plain is thus partitioned into an infinitude of little peninsulas. On one arise the ruins of the Abbey of Cambus-Kenneth; on another the eminence is crowned with foliage alone. Towards the south, the green hills of Campsie; to the north, the azure summits of the Ochill mountains; and to the north west, the gloomy and majestic Grampian mountains form the imperfect frame-work of the prospect.

From Stirling to Callander we travelled aristocratically; that is to say, in a post-chaise; but we have no right to boast of it. For a shilling a mile we were supplied with postilion, chaise, and horses. We, moreover, had resolved to travel on foot, on quitting the Trosachs; our baggage is of a portable description; our trunks precede us to Glasgow.

We next surveyed Doune, another royal castle, less remarkable now as a fortress, than as being associated with the memory of the poor Queen Mary Stuart again!—Here are the approaches of

Benvorlichand Uavar, where the stag, in the *Lady of the Lake*, sought an asylum on hearing the first cry of the pack. In the neighbourhood it is recollected that Sir Walter used to make frequent sojourns and excursions in these parts. We are now about to apply one of his most boasted paintings to the test of examination. We are at the foot of Ben Ledi, in the village of Callander.

The river which waters the valley of Callander bears the name of Teath; it originates a little above the village, from the union of two large brooks, one derived from Lake Voil, and the other from Lake Vennachar. The rapidity of its course appears to testify its double origin from mountains. Teath signifies in Gaelic *boiling water*. In fact, the Teath hurries and foams through the windings of the plain, like that part of its waters which descended, in cascade after cascade, the defiles of Leny. Its sinuosities so well delineate the circumvallations of a camp, that all antiquarians have attributed these pretended traces of castrametation to the sojourn of the Romans. The irregular breaks on the banks of the Teath are partially indicated by a curtain of trees; the country houses scattered here and there, and the cottage of the shepherd also adorn the vale. The village itself, sheltered by rocks in the form of an amphitheatre, is situated in the farther distance of the landscape where its pointed steeple gracefully displays itself. The physiognomy of the inhabitants begins to assume a striking character. In the costume of the villagers

the mottled tartan is most frequent; but among the greater number, this stuff is so ragged, that one would be inclined to regard the absence of breeches as an economical expedient. The children, indeed, run about here half naked, like little savages.

A tolerable inn, with the head of the laird who founded it for a sign, (the Laird of Macnab) terminates Callander towards the east. We took a repast there, which was almost limited to an excellent slice of salmon.*

The landlord boasted, as one of the wonders of the district, of the cascade, which at the distance of a mile and a half from Callander forms a torrent called the Keltie. We took as our guide thither a little girl, who gaily led us to the spot, no doubt in expectation of obtaining the customary shilling. While she ran lightly before us, without following the beaten path, but gambolling with the giddiness of childhood through the mountain heath, I thought of the little girl who served as a guide to Morton, when he went to visit Balfour of Burley in the cave of Lenklater. This recollection brought to my mind that of the landscape described by Sir W. Scott, and I was agreeably surprised to recognise its principal features. I made the remark to my companion, at first attributing this coincidence to my imagination only;

* Salmon is generally delicious in Scotland: it is the standing dish. It is so abundant, that it is said some servants, on entering families, make terms not to be dined upon it more than three times per week.

but at length we could no longer doubt that we were traversing the same spots as Morton; and almost as fortunate as the traveller Bruce, in discovering the long sought sources of the Nile, I exclaimed—There is the cascade of Blacklin!—While I said this, the resounding accents of the torrent drowned ours, and we were obliged to speak lip to ear in order to communicate our ideas. A rustic bridge has superseded the oak which Burley threw from one rocky bank to the other. The little Scotch girl passed it rapidly, and we passed it after her; but when we threw back our eyes on the bank we had just quitted, we were at once charmed and affrighted at our boldness, so fragile and insecure did the unparapeted bridge appear, extending over a gulph of near a hundred feet in depth. We then attempted to measure the abyss with our eyes through the humid vapour, which continually escapes from it. On either side, the unequal projections of the rock appear on the point of jostling, as if to stifle the torrent which ploughs a passage through its entrails. The surges, chafing at the resistance which this narrow gorge opposes to their hurried passage, dash over each other, and as often as they are repelled by the obstacle of some rocky point, return to struggle and hurl themselves against the less forward waves of the cataract. Such as are able to escape this sort of running conflict fall, diffuse themselves in foam over a wider expanse, till other abrupt impediments renew their rage against the rock and against themselves. The roaring of the tor-

mented billows, has something terrible in its effect when contrasted with the surrounding silence and seclusion. The spectator has no difficulty in persuading himself with Morton, that he can distinguish cries, exclamations, and even articulate words, as if the demon of the hell of waters mingled his complaints with the voice of his furious waves. As soon as we had satiated our eyes with all of terrible and poetic which this spectacle and the view of the adjacent site derives from being associated with the imposing narrative, which it invests with a double degree of interest, we repassed the bridge, and resumed the way to Callander; our young guide, still preceding us with untired gaiety, and often pointing with her finger, in order to prevent us losing any interesting view of the torrent, whenever we stopped to listen to the decreasing tumult of the waterfall of Blacklin.

Before quitting the Trosachs and Loch Katrin, we re-ascended the pass of Leney, by the side of the rapid current which rushes from Lochlubraig. This defile is what is here called a Ghaut—a narrow ravine, which is the only means of communication between the heights and the plain. It is necessary to preserve a little of our admiration for the numerous scenes which remain to be visited. The pass of Leney, however, would well deserve describing, so numerous are the variations of its windings, so delightful was it to lose ourselves among its sinuosities; sometimes pausing to observe the torrent falling from cataract to cataract, ourselves, meanwhile, seated on an abrupt pinnacle

of its bank; sometimes descending into the middle of its bed and sustaining ourselves by a fragment of rock, the foot of which alone was bathed by the surges, and which only waited the approximating erosion of the waters, to roll down with tumultuous violence to the plain.

The grandest spectacle of the environs of Callander, is the aspect of the gigantic Ben Ledi, (the mountain of God); but we are about to pay it a closer visit in proceeding to the Trosachs.

P. S. Will you allow me to suggest to you the subject of a painting worthy of your palette. Do you recollect, as Morton and Burley return together from the inn at Niel, the old woman, who, seated at an elbow of the road, and wrapped in a red mantle, rises, approaches the puritan fanatic, and tells him in a mysterious tone, "Do not pass that way, your life is in danger there; a lion is in ambush," &c.

Generally speaking, the various scenes of Scotch partizanship are of all the scenes in the Scotch novels, those which interest us the most. It is a Scotch history; but it is, moreover, a faithful mirror of sundry epochs in ours.

LETTER XCIV.

TO M. DE FAUCONFRET.

Tarbet, August 1, 1822. — I write to you from an inn, adjoining the marvellous lake of "floating isles, of breezeless waves, and finless fishes," enclosed by high mountains, which sometimes abruptly terminate their sterile ramparts on its banks, and sometimes appear to fly each other, leaving at their feet the most enchanting vallies of Scotland. On turning my head, I can distinguish among these mountains the pyramidal cone of Ben Lomond, which gives its name to the lake formerly distinguished by the more euphonous name of Lyncalidor. We have already performed the *exploit*—nor is there aught exaggerated in the word—of climbing the summit of the king of Caledonian mountains; but I should not forget that we have left behind us Loch Katrine and the Trosachs. Let us proceed in an orderly manner. I cannot, however, resist my inclination of describing to you a singular scene which has just occurred on the threshold of the Tarbet-inn, and which will demonstrate that the Stuarts still retain a remnant of their devotees among the people of the mountains. I fancied myself for a moment transported

to the epoch when the Baron of Bradwardine still lived—I, who, after the festivals of Edinburgh, gave up the idea of re-perusing, except in light of fiction, the last efforts of jacobitism, in *Waverley* or *Rob Roy*.

We prepared to visit the cave of M'Gregor. While standing at the door of Coll Walker's Inn, Charles F—e and myself were relating to our host and some travellers, the triumphal entry of George IV. into the northern capital, when a female, who till then had remained at a distance, recognized us by our accent, and approaching us with a degree of familiarity, grasped our hands, affectionately squeezed them, and exclaimed in a mixture of English and Scotch, or Gaelic, "Good Frenchmen! faithful friends of Charles Stuart." Not perfectly comprehending at first her gesticulations and expressions, we continued to describe the pomp displayed around the king, and especially the renewal of ancient customs, as if old Caledonia had issued from the tomb, to proclaim her allegiance, in common with modern Scotland. By degrees, to an air of doubt, and afterwards of ill-restrained impatience, we perceived a smile of incredulity succeed on the features of the female, as if she thought that the subject of our narrative had been maliciously suggested by such of our auditors, as knowing her susceptibility on the question, had prompted us to ruffle her associations. At length she exclaimed with a kind of enthusiasm, but in vulgar expressions, the sense of which I have preserved. "No, no! you are Frenchmen; you cannot betray

Charles Stuart. I am of Montrose's Clan; George is a whelp." "But my good woman, all the Stuarts are dead." "It is loyalty that is dead. Who has told you that there are no longer any Stuarts? If it were even so, we should still be faithful to their ashes."

I might, certainly, while standing on the domains of the Montroses and Macgregors, calling to my aid the associations of Walter Scott's heroes, make a Madeleine of this woman.* But I shall limit myself to the truth. She had nothing remarkable, either in her person, or in her figure: but she expressed herself with great warmth; there was poetry in the emphatic accentuation of her words, which we got Coll Walker to explain to us. The latter, from the first, had made signs to us that she was mad; the word, which he afterwards employed to characterise her madness, gave us to understand that she was merely what we call *exalté* (flighty). She, herself, quickly returned to the subject of more material affairs, pathetically describing her mode of livelihood and her poverty; not for the sake of begging, but to induce us to purchase a basket of apples, which she went to fetch as soon as she perceived that we were willing to give her the price she demanded. Prudence and adroitness, combined with fanaticism,—these are the characteristic features of many women of the same class in Scotland, and in the novels of the Scotch Chronicler. But I must

* The Abbot.

conduct you with us from Callander to Loch Lomond.

It is reckoned to be ten miles from Callander to the Trosachs by the shortest road. We traversed this distance in a few hours, so as to be enabled to sleep at an inn lately established on the banks of Loch Achray. On our right, we left the plains of Bochastle, and to the left the Waterfall of Carchouzie, which issues from Lake Vennachar. Supplied with a map arranged by the Rev. Mr. Stirling, we easily recognized

> "Clan Alpine's outmost guard,
> Coilantogle's ford."
> *Lady of the Lake.*

Not far from thence was the scene of the terrible conflict, foot to foot, between Roderick and Fitz-James, in which the royal knight was victorious, after having vainly offered the hand of friendship to the savage Son of Gael. Lake Vennachar, which is somewhat monotonous in consequence of the scarcity of trees on its shores, extends in a basin of five miles in length by one and a half in width. It was formerly the abode of one of those aquatic genii called Kelpies, which the superstition of the country continues to station there even now. This Kelpie, according to Sir W. Scott, destroyed one evening the whole funeral procession of a burial. According to another legend, some children who were playing near the Lake beneath the shade of the *melancholy* wood, (*Coilleburoine*) perceived a pretty little horse issue from it, which, by

its gentleness, induced them all to hazard themselves on its back. As each new rider mounted, the horse's crupper extended to make room for another; it was the Kelpie, who suddenly plunged into his watery cavern with his prey.

Not far from Vennachar is Lanrick mead, the appointed rendezvous of the clan of Alpine, when the fiery cross was sent through the Highlands by order of Roderick Dhu.

After a mile's walk, the traveller finds himself on an eminence near the Turk's Bridge, whence he descries the charming lake Achray, the windings of its waters, which escape through a vast meadow, and the dome of Ben Venu, which commands all the various points of view in the district from Callander. To the right is Glenfinlas, the scene of a ballad which commenced the poetical reputation of Walter Scott, and the waterfall where Brian performed the mysterious ceremony of Taghaim, in order to consult the oracles respecting the fate of Roderick.

The mountains which surround Glenfinlas, have no features of rudeness or abruptness in their elegant delineation. Heath is seldom seen on their summits; but it is replaced by a carpet of turf, which effaces all the inequalities of their contours. Numerous silvery threads of water descend, and sometimes intersect each other towards their feet.

Twilight surprised us at the entrance of the Trosachs, and we passed the night in the New Inn, built on the banks of Loch Achray, by James

Stewart, a celebrated guide, who is indebted for his little fortune to the *Lady of the Lake.*

While our supper was getting ready, we availed ourselves of a fine moonlight, to reconnoitre the banks of Loch Achray. This lake, which is so graceful in its limited dimensions, and which I should be inclined to call the jewel of the Scotch lakes, is only, perhaps, an accessory to the landscape of which it constitutes a part; but that landscape, tranquil and picturesque as it is, is especially delightful when reflected in its motionless crystal. The water is so pure, and so silvery, that it reflects, with all their incidental varieties, every shade of colour, and the least details of the local scenes which environ it. Next morning, rising an hour before the two guides, whom we had hired for the Trosachs, we saw the first rays of morning effacing the lustre of the last star in the waters of Loch Achray,* and we heard the earliest morning thrush awaken his companions of the bower. This bird, here called the Mavis,† has a melodious song, and is a good substitute for the nightingale of our rural plains.

What a contrast, to pass from this gentle and smiling lake into the gorge of the Trosachs.

The boatmen-guides preceded us with their

* "Alas! thou lovely lake that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear."

† *Turdus Musicus.*

oars on their shoulders. We were surprised to see them detecting paths across these rocks, which appeared to close the valley with an impassable barrier. By degrees we found ourselves in the bosom of the defile, at the very spot, perhaps, where the gallant courser of Fitz-James fell. The savage grandeur of the Trosachs revealed to my imagination a new description of the sublime, to which, till then, I was a stranger. Sir Walter Scott has described in his verses, with the use of somewhat fantastic imagery, this confused mass of rocks, mountains, and woods; but it is impossible, perhaps, for poetry to sketch its principal features otherwise than by comparisons. Painting would here have all the advantage; but what frame would be vast enough to comprehend the entire of the *gigantesquè* picture? In the very middle of the defile immense fragments of rocks, which might be thought the ruins of some earthquake, appear to threaten the rash adventurer by a new fall; some of these are frightful in their naked grandeur; others derive picturesque features from their mossy covering and the vast fantail leaves of the mountain fern. From the crevices escape the trunks of weeping willows, the branches of which sweep over them like long hair. At the highest pinnacles the least breeze occasions the parasite plants, and the branches of the birch or pines, to wave backwards and forwards like suspended banners. And last, supereminent above all the singular decoration of

these precipices are seen the cones of Ben An and Ben Venue,—immense and eternal pyramids, appearing to have singly braved the terrible convulsion which scattered so many enormous ruins at their feet. At the moment that the mountains caught our view, the rays of the sun crowned them with a diadem of fire, and the evaporation from their summits deposited a light, diaphanous and azure vapour there, resembling an elegant plume of feathers. This phenomenon is, indeed, permanent on the greater part of mountains, but the most unartificial description in such a place as this must naturally resemble the poetical visions of the imagination. Let the reader, after this, conceive, in a spot so imposing and sublimely terrible, the grand scene wherein Fitz-James dared express to his unknown guide, a desire to be placed front to front with Roderic and his rebel clan.

"'Have, then, thy wish!—'he whistled shrill
And he was answer'd from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlieu,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles grey their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior arm'd for strife.

That whistle garrison'd the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood, and still.
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The mounteineer cast glance of pride
Along Ben Ledi's living side,
Then fix'd his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James—'How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu?'

Fitz-James was brave:—Though to his heart
The life-blood thrill'd with sudden start,
He mann'd himself with dauntless air,
Return'd the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before:—
'Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I.'—
Sir Roderick mark'd—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel
Short space he stood—then waved his hand:
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanish'd where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;
It seem'd as if their mother Earth
Had swallow'd up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had toss'd in air,
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide;

"The sun's last glance was glinted back,
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green, and cold grey stone."

Walter Scott, the novelist, has certainly been a formidable rival to Walter Scott the poet; but I am prompted to add the above passage to those which I have cited in the course of the work, to demonstrate that there is also real poetry in the verses of the *Lady of the Lake*. The Trosachs also recal the pathetic episode of Blanche, the maniac, in the same poem, enriched as it is with dramatic contrasts of characters, as well as in purely descriptive paintings. The poet who has so well depicted the filial piety of Ellen, the devotion of the faithful bard to Douglas's banished fortunes, the rude generosity of Roderick, &c. is not alone the most picturesque of poets. He at least shares with Burns the glory—heart-thrilling to an author who feels attachment to his country—of finding his verses becoming favourite quotations of the people. But we have already traversed the summits of the Trosachs, and our eyes greedily wander in search of the charming lake which caused Fitz-James to forget the loss of his steed, the ill success of his hunting excursion, and all his fatigues. It is necessary, in fact, to guess the site of Loch Katrine, for one of the rocks which compose its various cincture, advances in the form of a promontory, and suffers nothing, in the first instance, to be perceived, but a basin of narrow extent. While our guides prepared the

boat, we climbed one of the scarped rocks of the banks, and recognized the solitary lake, the waves of which resembling lightly balanced flakes of gold, glittered with a thousand reflected dyes, like a vast reservoir of light. The view was dazzling. When we had traversed the lake in the boat, we still more admired the variable lineaments of its banks, as well as the changeable vistas they exhibited, in consequence of the numerous headlands and peninsulas which succeed each other from the termination of the Trosachs, and often deceive the eye into the belief that the lake is about to end abruptly. Suddenly the promontory recedes, and a new basin displays its contours, till another promontory of rocks vainly menaces the voyager with another barrier as ready to disappear as the former on the approach of the boat. The natural colour of the waters is dark, from the very cause of their transparency, because they borrow the hue from the tint of their deep bed. This imparts a more vivid contrast to the smiling verdure of the shores, which are, also, besprinkled with little white or azure pebbles. We saluted the Isle of the Lady of the Lake, a little magnified by the poet; and a little more distant, remarked a tree which projects into the water, and the branches of which are arranged and intertwined in such a way, as to represent the head of a stag surveying himself in the lake, athwart the foliage of the trees. At fifty paces distance the illusion is complete.

The descent of an avalanche on the opposite

shore, has rent the side of a rock; a thunderbolt, in another place, has furrowed and blackened the granite ridge. The boatman indicated with his finger the approaches to Coir-Nan-Uriskin, the cavern of the Brownies.

One only of our guides proceeded with us as far as Invershaid. On quitting Loch Katrine we gaily braved the fatigue of traversing a kind of desert; that is to say, a series of eminences and damp ravines, where the very verdure is a snare, concealing an insecure soil, which yields under the foot, and entraps it into a clammy mud; and where sometimes, also, the traveller gives sudden vent with his feet to streams of water, of a black, slimy consistence, or red as blood. From point to point we perceived a human figure appearing on a little hillock; it was a shepherd enveloped in his grey, square mantle, and leaning on a heavy staff of citisus, sometimes surveying our progress with a more indifferent than curious air, at others, exchanging a few words in Gaelic with our guide. Occasionally, in order to break the monotonous silence of the desert, while threading some humid gorge, we stopped to pick up a stone, and hurl it with all our force; the noise it made frequently started a bird as white as snow, called here the Ptarmigan,* as it roosted on a tuft of myrtle, bearing jet black berries.†

* A species of Gelinote, or *Tetrao Lugopus.*

† *Vaccinium Myrtilus.*

We had traversed two-thirds of our way, when we made a halt for a few minutes at a cottage, or mountain hut, which I may describe as the model of almost all those which are met with in the Highlands. This hut was built of irregular unconnected stones, and covered with turf and heath for a roof. The interior was divided into two apartments by a partition of birchen planks; the largest being the general sleeping apartment by night, and during day the parlour. In the middle was lighted a turf fire, over which was suspended a cauldron supported by a hook and chain attached to the ceiling. The opening for the smoke was made laterally, fear of rain precluding it being made directly over the fire; it would, indeed, seem that in winter this kind of chimney is closed, in order to prevent the smoke from escaping from any other issue than the common door-way. The second apartment is reserved for the cow, the poney, and the poultry; in many of the huts there is but a single apartment for the cattle and the family.

At length we no longer encountered ascents, and perceived no more mountains on the horizon; we were descending a narrow gorge clothed with thick hazles, and other shrubs. We began to breathe a purer air, of which we stood in need.

It was not so much our guide that indicated our proper direction as the course of a rivulet, whose tinkling murmur soon enabled us to re-discover it, when the projection of some occasional nook or the impenetrable shrubbery compelled us to make a

circuit. After a final mile's walking, through these smiling labyrinths, which prepared us for a transition to some enchanting spectacle, we were not deceived in finding ourselves suddenly on the banks of Loch Lomond, the finest of the Scotch lakes.

We entered the hut of a boatman, and requested some bread and milk, which was brought us on the grass. Never had I anticipated a more exquisite repast, but it must be confessed, that the milk had remained since morning in the hut, and was nauseously flavoured with smoke. As to the bread, that also required all the ravenousness of our appetite to subject to the tooth an oaten cake of unleavened dough, which crumbled in the mouth like sand, and was of a most disagreeable taste. Like one of the heroes in *Gil Blas*, I moistened my bit of cake in the water of a spring, which ran by us on its passage to the lake. My companion and myself smiled at each other during the repast; when it was finished we recovered all our strength and courage; the boatman found us a new guide, and we took leave of our aboriginal host and his primitive table.

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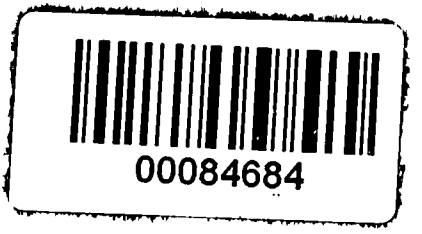
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